



Baptist Union Theological Seminary
LIBRARY.

Library No. 804

Shelf No. 138

Purchased from the Estate of
GEORGE B. IDE, D. D.,

Of Springfield, Mass.

Chicago, March 1st, 1873.

W. WALTON,

Sunderland.

No.

~~Class~~ 204

~~Book~~ 618

University of Chicago Library

GIVEN BY

Besides the main topic this book also treats of

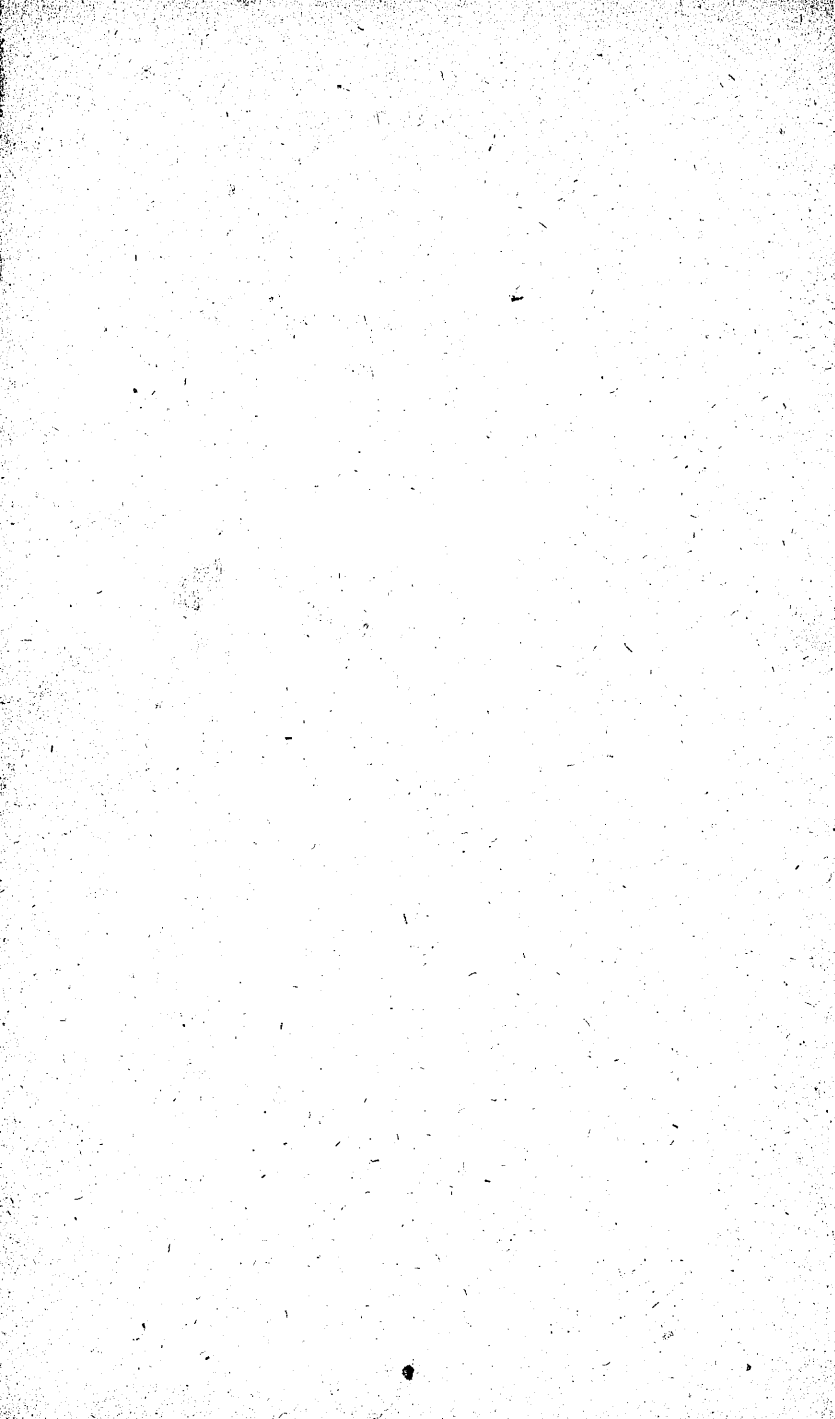
Subject No.

On page

Subject No.

On page

CARDS MADE



LECTURES

ON

SCRIPTURE PARABLES

BY

WILLIAM BENGO' COLLYER, D.D. F.A.S.

AND A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
OF LONDON.

"Invenio imagines, quibus si quis nobis uti vetat, et potius illas solis judicat esse concessas, neminem mihi videtur ex antiquis legisse, apud quos nondum captabatur plausibilis oratio. Illi, qui simpliciter, et demonstrandæ res causâ loquebantur, Parabolis referti sunt, quas existimo necessarias, non ex eadem causâ, quâ potius, sed ut imbecilitatis nostræ adminicula sint, et ut discentem et audientem in rem præsentem adducant."

SENECA.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR BLACK & CO. LEADENHALL STREET;

WALKER & EDWARDS; AND SHERWOOD, NEELY & JONES, PATERNOSTER ROW.

Sold also by

JAMES BLACK, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN; WILLIAMS & SON, STATIONERS' COURT;

CONDER, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; HAMILTON, & BAYNES, PATERNOSTER ROW;

BURTON & BRIGGS, LEADENHALL STREET; AND BROWN, NEAR

GIBRALTAR CHAPEL, BETHNAL-GREEN ROAD.

1815.

BS 680
P2 C1

Home
Expository
Exegetical Notes
Lythology

63192

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

PRINCE AUGUSTUS FREDERICK,

DUKE OF SUSSEX,

EARL OF INVERNESS,

BARON OF ARKLOW,

KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER,

℥c. ℥c. ℥c. ℥c.

SIR,

I ACKNOWLEDGE with gratitude the distinction so graciously conferred upon me by your Royal Highness, in permitting this work to appear under the sanction of your illustrious name. Independently of the honour arising from your high rank, the patronage of which any writer might covet to have attached to his labours, I know

not to whom such a production could be so justly dedicated; because I know of no one more competent to judge, either of the subject itself, or of the manner in which it has been treated, in a literary point of view, than your Royal Highness. To a strong and inquiring mind, which no one, who has the honour of knowing you, will presume to deny is possessed by your Royal Highness, you have added deep reflection; and, amidst innumerable public avocations, have found leisure for diligent study. Your researches have turned upon Oriental Literature, as connected especially with the Sacred Writings; and I solicited the privilege of laying this volume at your feet, not from motives of personal vanity, but from the conviction that the subject of these Lectures is peculiarly adapted to the genius and taste of your Royal Highness.

Your Royal Highness is, however, well aware, that higher interests depend upon the discussion, than the gratification of taste, or the delightful elucidations of science. Literature has its charms, and speculation its utility: by them truth is elicited and established:—but truth alone should be the object of all our researches, and *that* truth as the basis of our everlasting hopes. The mind whose faculties are directed to this important point, under the influence of true religion, ennobles every rank, and adorns every station of life: and without the guidance of Revelation, the wisest must err;—without the “power of godliness,” the most illustrious are debased and insignificant.

The Parables of our Lord, while they were addressed to all ranks, and adapted to all circumstances, always held in view the elucidation of the

doctrines of Christianity, and the enforcement of it's precepts: they spake the same language to the prince and to the peasant: they guarded the rights of God, and developed the scheme of salvation: they shewed that the present is nothing, but as it is subordinated to the interests of eternity.

To the venerable Sovereign of this mighty Empire, the Scriptures addressed themselves;—and, with what attention he listened to their voice, with what constancy he read them, with what humility he obeyed them—framing his life and his character upon their prescriptions,—your Royal Highness was a witness! May the spirit of your Royal Father rest upon all his illustrious Family; and extend it's religious and moral influence over the people who have been so long blessed under his government, who cherish so dear a remembrance of his

virtues, and who rejoice in the prospect that the sceptre of Britain shall be perpetuated in the hands of the House of Brunswick!

The hour is at hand when all human distinctions shall cease. "The fashion of this world passeth away;" and with it, the sorceries of pleasure, the flatteries of prosperity, the dazzling splendour of nobility, and all the imposing consequence attached to rank and power. In that hour, so rapidly approaching, and so infinitely important, may your Royal Highness feel all the consolations of that divine system, which in the following pages I have attempted (feebly, I fear) to illustrate, from images themselves of the most sublime and most touching character! And in the day when the empires of this world shall perish, amidst the flames of the universe, may the

PRINCE of the kings of the earth place upon your head an immortal crown, which, amidst the prostrations of that royal assembly of the sons of God, among whom I trust your Royal Highness will be numbered, you will rejoice to lay at His feet!

With every sentiment of gratitude and duty,

I have the honour to remain,

SIR,

Your Royal Highness's

Most obedient, and
sincerely attached

Servant,

WILLIAM BENGOLLYER.

Sept. 1. 1815.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

A.

ADELPHI Book Society

Col. Addison, Halifax, Nova Scotia

John Addison, Esq. Homerton

Mr. Alexander, Mark-lane

Mr. Alger, Minorities

Thomas Allport, Esq. Peckham

— Allport, Esq. Bombay

Mr. Andrews, St. Paul's Church-yard

Mr. Andrews, Western-street Brewery

Mr. Apsey, Houndsditch

B.

The Right Honourable the Earl of Buchan

William Babington, M.D. F. R. S.

R. C. Bazett, Esq. York Place, Portman-square

Rev. J. Blackburn, Fenchfield, Essex

Rev. C. Berry, Hatfield Heath

Rev. Wm. Brown, Gibraltar Chapel, Church-street, Bethnal-green-road,

Miss Baker, Peckham

[30 copies

Stephen Barber, Esq. Camberwell

S. N. Barber, Esq. Denmark-hill

Ebenezer Barber, Esq.

Mr. Samuel Barber, Cheapside

Joseph Barber, Esq. Camberwell

Mr. Henry Barlow, jun. Stockport

Mr. Baynes, Paternoster-row, 6 copies

Mr. Beattie, Bank Side

Mrs. Bee, Peckham

Mr. Bell, Jamaica-row, Rotherhithe

Mr. Bell, Hoxton Academy

Mr. Henry Biggs, St. Mary Hill

Mr. Binfield, Norton Falgate

Edward Blore, Esq. Goswell-street-road

Mr. Joseph Bolton, Meeting-lane, Peckham

Mrs. Bond, Stoke Newington

Mr. Bore, Commercial-road

Mr. Bowmer, Charles-street, Horsley-down

Mr. John Bosher, Copenhagen Wharf

Francis Brewin, Esq. Kent-road

Mesdames Brown and Stokes, Peckham, 2 copies

Henry Brown, Esq. Bristol

Mr. George Browne, Walworth

H. M. Bulmer, Esq. Penton-street, Pentonville

Mr. Henry Bunting, Sunbury

Rev. Geo. Burder

Mr. J. W. Burford, Blackman-street, 2 copies

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. Burgess, Lutterworth
 Miss Burkett, Artillery-court, 2 copies
 Jeremiah Bury, Esq. Bower House, Hope Hill, Stockport
 M. Buszard, Esq. Lutterworth
 Mrs. Buxton, Addington-place

C.

Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Cloyne
 General Cliffe, Blackheath
 Rev. Mr. Chapman, Greenwich
 Rev. J. M. Clack, Hoxton College
 Rev. Thomas Craig, Booking
 Thos. Cartwright, Esq. Stockport
 Mr. Chappel, Bell's-gardens, Peckham
 Mrs. Charles, Peckham-Rye-lane
 Mr. E. J. Chirgivin, Lombard-street
 Miss Churchman, Hampstead
 R. F. Clarke, Esq. Weymouth-terrace, Hackney-road
 Wm. Clarke, Esq. Peckham-Rye-lane
 Mr. John Cock, Fenchurch-street
 Miss Coleman, Stratford
 James Collins, Esq. Stamford-hill
 James Cooke, Esq. Peckham
 James Compigne, Esq. Camberwell-terrace
 Mr. B. Coombs, Student, Stepney-green
 Joseph Coope, Esq. Osborne-street, Whitechapel, 10 copies
 Mrs. Corrock, Moorfields
 Mr. Cothay, Messrs. Cothay, Robertson, and Co. Little Eastcheap
 Miss Cox, Manor-place, Walworth
 Mr. Campion, Pentonville

D.

Rev. Henry Draper, D. D.
 Rev. Joseph Denham, Clerkenwell
 Mrs. Daniel, Milk-street
 Mr. D. Davies, Hoxton Academy
 George Whitfield Dawkes, Esq. Walworth
 Mr. John Dawson, Great Bentley, Essex
 Miss Deale, Peckham
 J. H. Dennett, Esq. Gravesend
 Mrs. Denslow, Charter-house-street
 Mr. Dewar, Spring Garden-place, Stepney
 Matthias Dipnal, Esq. Peckham
 Matthias Dipnal, jun. Esq. Peckham
 Philip Drake, Esq. East Dulwich
 Mr. Dure, Cross-lane
 Mr. John Dyson, Little Eastcheap
 Mr. Samuel Dyson, Botolph-lane

E.

The Right Honourable Lord Erskine, K. T.
 Hon. Henry Erskine, &c. &c. &c.
 Eclectic Book Society, Fish-street-hill

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

Mrs. Eade, Stöke Newington
 Dr. Edwards, Peckham
 Mr. John Edwards, Register Office, Bank
 John Edwards, Fawke's-buildings, Tower-street
 Charles Enderby, Esq. Blackheath
 Mr. William Evans, 173, Shoreditch

F.

General Farrington, Blackheath
 Mr. Fairbrother, Hoxton Academy
 Mr. Joseph Fearn, Stock Exchange, 2 copies
 Mr. James Featherstone, Tunbridge
 Nathaniel Fenn, Esq. Botolph-lane
 Mr. John Fenn, Peckham
 Mr. Fidler, Peckham-Rye-lane
 Joseph Fidler, Esq. Peckham
 Mrs. James Finch, Sible Hedingham, Essex
 Mrs. Christopher Finch, Sudbury
 Mr. John Flaxman, Buckingham-street, Fitzroy-square
 Mr. Fleuret, Southgate
 Rev. John Fowler, Walworth
 Peter Ponteanau, Esq. No. 8, Fuller-street, Bethnal-green Church
 Mrs. Foulger, Star-alley, Ratcliffe-highway
 Mr. John Foulger, Star-alley, Ratcliffe-highway
 Founder's Hall Reading Society
 Mr. John Fox, Bath-place, Peckham
 Mr. Freeman, Hoxton Academy
 Mr. Furness, Mark-lane
 Mr. John Furnivall, jun. Park-street, Camberwell

G.

Hon. and Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Gloucester
 The Right Honourable the Countess of Glencairn
 Olinthus G. Gregory, LL.D. Woolwich
 Mr. James Green, Stockport
 Rev. J. Goode, Islington
 Rev. Daniel Griffiths, Long Burkley, Northampton
 Miss Gale, Hoxton
 Mr. Gale, 6, Norman-street, St. Luke's
 Mr. William Garside, Grocer, Stockport
 Mr. Gascoyne, Leadenhall-street
 Mrs. Gates, Peckham
 Mr. Gorge, Bread-street, Cheapside
 Mr. Gibson, Peckham
 Mr. William Giles, Peckham
 Mr. Gilkes, Barbican
 Mrs. Grofey, Craven-street
 Miss S. Gold, Ludgate-hill
 Mr. Golding, Ditton-court, Kent
 George Gouger, Esq. Brixton
 John Gouger, Esq. Sherborne
 Mr. Samuel Grafftey, Walworth
 Mr. Grainger, Peckham-Rye-lane

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. P. P. Grellier, Wormwood-street
 Mr. Greenbough, Wapping High-street
 Robert Grey, Esq. Peckham Rye

H.

Rev. Winter Hamilton, Leeds
 Rev. Mr. Howell, Watling-street
 John Haighton, Watling-street
 Mr. Hall, Bermondsey-street
 Mr. Hall, Hoxton Academy
 Mr. Hamilton, Paternoster-row, 12 copies
 Geo. Hammond, Esq. Whitechapel
 Mrs. Hanson, Peckham
 Mr. Hardy, Jerusalem Coffee-house
 Mr. B. Harris, Great Tower-street
 Mrs. Harrison, Peckham
 Mr. Hesketh, Forrest-hill
 Rev. Richard Hartley, Lutterworth
 Miss Hawkes, Peckham
 Samuel Hayardall, Esq. Peckham Rye
 Richard Heale, Esq. Peckham
 Mr. Richard Heaps, 167, Shoreditch
 Mr. George Heaps, Leeds
 Mr. Robert Heath, Bank
 Mr. Wm. Hearn, Hoxton
 Mr. S. M. Herbert, Rye-lane, Peckham
 Mr. Hersee, Wellington-place, Goswell-street
 Mr. Henry Hersee, ditto
 Mr. S. Higginbotham, Macclesfield
 Mr. J. R. Hincks, Cheltenham
 Miss Hirst, Addington-place, Camberwell
 Miss A. M. Hoare, Peckham
 Mr. Hobson, East-India House
 Wm. Holman, Esq. Lower Thames-street
 Mrs. Hookins, Yeovil
 Mr. William Hooper, Milk-street
 Mrs. Sarah Hopwood, Fish-street-hill
 John Houghton, Esq. Peckham
 Samuel Houston, Esq. Great St. Helens
 Wm. Hubbard, Esq. Warminster
 Mr. Hughes, Hoxton
 Mr. William Hull, jun. Yeovil
 Mr. E. J. Hyddon, Kingsland-road

I. & J.

Mrs. Ivatts, Peckham
 Mr. Walter Jackson, Gutter-lane
 Mrs. Jacob, St. Alban's-street, Windsor
 Charles Jacob, Esq. Greenwich, 2 copies
 Mr. Jacobs, Bristol
 Mrs. Jameson, Lewisham
 Mr. Jas. J. Johnson, City-road

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. John Johnson, City-road
 Mr. John Jones, East-India House
 Mr. Jones, Peckham-Rye-lane
 Miss Jones, Charlotte-street, Bedford-square
 Joseph Jordan, Esq. Denmark-hill

K.

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF KENT, &c. &c. &c.
 Lady Knightly
 Mrs. Keates, Cheapside
 Mr. Kennion, Salter's Hall-court
 Samuel Kent, Esq. Mark-lane, 2 copies
 William Kent, Esq. Clapton
 Mr. John Kiddell, East-India House

L.

Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Landaff
 Rev. Mr. Leifchild, Kennington, 6 copies
 Rev. William Lloyd, Southgate
 Rev. Samuel Lowell, Bristol
 Rev. Dr. Lake, Rotherhithe
 Samuel Lawford, Esq. Peckham
 Mr. Peter Lecount, Craven-street, Charles-square
 Mrs. Lee, Shard's-place, Peckham
 Thos. Luck, Esq. Cornhill
 Mrs. Nancy Lees, Stockport
 Mr. Richard Light, Islington
 Mr. Lloyd, Rotherhithe
 J. B. Lobb, Esq. Southampton
 Mr. Lyddon, Excise Office, London
 Mademoiselle Lyon, Peckham

M.

Lady Manners
 Rev. Robert S. M^cAll, A. M. Macclesfield
 Mr. Hugh Mac Cullum, Lochgilpead, Argyleshire
 Mr. Mallison, Abchurch-yard
 Mr. Manfield, Denmark-hill
 E. Marsden, Peckham
 Miss Marshall, Peckham
 Miss Marshall, High Holborn
 S. B. Mason, Esq. Peckham
 J. B. Matthews, Esq. Rochester
 James Maunder, Esq. Mark-lane
 Mrs. Maxwell
 Mr. M'Brain, Fenn-court, 2 copies
 Mr. James Medlon, Meteor-street, Maze, Tooley-street
 Mr. L. J. A. M'Henry, Friday-street
 Mr. Miller, Nicols-square
 Wm. Morgan, Esq. Camberwell
 Mr. Thomas Morris, Castle-street, Holborn
 Mrs. Morris, ditto

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS:

Richard Moseley, Esq. Peckham
Mr. Thomas Moulden, Peckham
Mr. Moxsy, Whitechapel-road Academy
Thos. Myers, Esq. M.A. Royal Military Academy, Woolwich

N.

Miss S. Naish, Walton on the Hill, Surrey
Thomas Napier, Esq. Peckham
Mr. Newcome, Pentonville
Mr. Samuel Newell, Ramsey, Hunts.
Mr. Newsome, Borough
Mr. Norris, jun. Little Moorgate
Mr. Nott, Newgate-street

O.

Rev. Edward Oakes, Chester
T. B. Oldfield, Esq. Peckham
Mr. Oswald, Deptford
Thomas Outhwaite, Esq. Queen-street, Cheapside

P.

Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Peterborough
Captain Phillips, Guildford-street
Robert Parker, Esq. Stockport
Mr. W. Parsons, Bristol
William Pearce, Esq. Peckham Rye
Mr. William Pearce, Castle-street, Bloomsbury
Mr. Peck, Lombard-street
Mr. Richard Pettit, College-hill
Mr. William Phipps, Whitechapel
Mr. Pickett, Bridgewater-square, Barbican
Mrs. Pierce, Greenwich
Mr. George Piercy, Leadenhall Market
Mr. John Pimloft, Temple
Mrs. Pine, Peckham
Joseph Pirson, Esq. Two Waters, Herts
Israel Pitman, Spa-road
Miss Porter, Sutton Scutney
Mr. Pough, Last-street, Borough
Thos. Plummer, Esq. Peckham
John Plummer, Esq. Peckham
Rev. Mr. Pugley, Hoxton Academy

R.

Rev. James Rudge, M. A. F. R. S.
Rev. T. Raffles, Liverpool
Messrs. Robins and Son, Tooley-street
Mr. Charles Robbins, Rosemary-lane, Peckham
Mr. Rugsley, Hoxton Academy
Mr. James Rusher, Reading, 3 copies
Mrs. Rutherford, Ratcliffe-highway
Mr. J. Rutter, Newgate Market
Richard Ryland, Esq. Savage-gardens

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

S.

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF SUSSEX, &c. &c. &c.
 Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Salisbury
 Right Hon. Lady Olivia Sparrow
 Rev. John Styles, D.D. Brighton
 Wm. Sabine, Esq. jun. Church-street, Spitalfields
 Rev. James Sabine, Tunbridge
 Rev. John Savill, Colchester
 Rev. George Scott, Greenwich
 Rev. Richard Herne Shepherd, Palace-street, Pimlico
 Rev. Mr. Simmonds, Hastings
 Rev. Mr. Sloper, London
 Mrs. Sandford, Queen-street, Chester
 Mr. Schofield, Jewin-street
 Benjamin Sewell, Esq. Peckham
 Rev. Jacob Snelgar, Hampstead
 Rev. Robert Stevenson, Castle Hedingham
 Benjamin Shaw, Esq. M. P.
 Mr. Shaw, Gracechurch-street, 2 copies
 Mr. John Shaw, Plummer's-row, Whitechapel
 Mrs. Sewell, Catton, Norwich
 Miss Sewell, Norwich
 Joseph Shilston, Upper Thornhaugh-street, Bedford-square
 S. Sherman, Esq. Wellingborough
 Mrs. Sims, Camberwell
 Robert Smith, Esq. F. R. S. F. A. S. Low Layton
 Mr. Smith, Upper Thames-street
 Miss Smith, Borough, Southwark
 Joseph Smith, Esq. Houndsditch
 Mr. Robert Smith, Hoxton Town
 J. W. Southgate, Esq. Forrest-hill, Peckham
 Thomas Stanley, Esq. Stockport
 John Stanley, Esq. Stockport
 Thomas Steel, Esq. Lark-hill, Stockport
 James Steele, Lime-street-square
 Mr. Z. C. Stiff, New-street, Covent-garden
 Miss Stockton, Whitechapel
 Robert Stokes, Esq. Peckham
 William Stokes, Esq. Peckham, 2 copies
 Joseph Stonard, Esq. Stamford-hill
 Mr. Strudwick, Covent-garden
 Henry James Swaine, Esq. Peckham
 Mr. Symons, Percival-street

T.

Rev. Thos. Taylor, King's Road, Bedford-row
 Miss Jane Templeman, Walthamstow
 Rev. Mr. Thodey, Homerton *
 Mrs. Thomas, Bridge-street, Westminster, 3 copies
 Mr. R. G. Thomas, Tooting-lodge, Surrey

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. Thornton, Chelsea
 Mr. William Tomline, Lombard-street
 John David Towse, Esq. Fishmonger's-hall
 George Trimmer, Esq. Peckham
 William Tryer, Esq. Winbourn, Dorset
 Mr. Charles Turner, Stockport

V.

Mr. Thomas Vidler, Leonard-street, Shoreditch
 Mr. Thomas Vidler, ditto

W.

William Wilberforce, Esq. M. P.
 The Hon. and Very Rev. the Dean of Windsor
 Rev. George Wall, Huddersfield
 ——— Waters, Esq. Fenchurch-street
 Mr. Wallis, Quondow, Leicestershire
 Miss Want, North Crescent
 Mr. Watson, Wapping
 Mr. J. West, Crane-court, Fleet-street
 Miss West, West-square
 Mr. William Westall, Canterbury-square
 Mrs. Weston
 Mr. Westwood, Newgate-street
 John Whitaker, Esq. Macclesfield
 Mr. Charles White, Barnet
 Mr. William White, Wood-street
 Mr. James Whitehead, Edinburgh
 Miss Whitehead, Edinburgh
 Mr. Thomas Whitelock, St. John's-square
 John Wilkes, Esq. Finsbury-square
 Thomas Willatts, Esq. Fore-street
 Broome P. Witts, Esq. Brunswick-square
 Thomas Wilkinson, Esq. Blackheath
 Mr. Thomas Williams, Academy, Poplar
 Mr. Joseph Williamson, Peckham
 Mr. Thomas Wilson, Cannon-street
 Mr. Henry Wilson, Battersea Fields
 Joshua Wilson, Esq. Islington
 Mrs. Wilson, Peckham Rye-lane
 Mr. George Wilson, Leeds
 Joseph Wood, Esq. Portsmouth-place, Kennington-lane
 Mr. Woolley, East-India House
 J. M. Wright, Esq. Peckham Rye

Y.

Rev. John Yockney, Islington
 Mr. William Young, Stockport.

PREFACE.

VARIOUS objects are proposed in the prefatory pages of different works. In some, the writer is anxious to propitiate; in others, to defy critical severity. It must be confessed by all (except, perhaps, the public organs of criticism themselves, with whom it is an established rule never to acknowledge an error, and who write as though they were possessed of an infallibility which they would ridicule as an exploded pretension in the head of the Roman Church), that there is little of tenderness exercised towards their literary compeers, cited to their anonymous tribunals, and placed in the unequal situation of receiving wanton assaults while they sustain a known respon-

sibility: and, to place indulgence out of the question, it does not always fall to the lot of authors to receive—the whole, indeed, which they ought to desire—justice. It is not the intention of this introduction to deprecate criticism, or to implore pity; but to state truly the intention and scheme of the work; and to submit it, when its object and plan are distinctly ascertained, to that scrutiny which every man who commits himself from the press ought to expect.

The first three Lectures must be considered as preliminary dissertations; and the fourth, as a general statement of the principles and mode of our Lord's preaching. I trust no one will do me the injustice to pronounce upon the general character and tendency of the volume, from any one, or even the whole, of these introductory discourses; the features of which are peculiar to themselves, and corresponding with their pretensions:—and I mention this less for the sake of the Readers of the Lectures, who will probably examine the entire Course before they pronounce upon the volume, than to deprecate a species of criticism (if it can

be so called) which sometimes is found to expend it's treasures upon a solitary image, or even to confine it's animadversions to a single page; having the chemical power of extracting from a sentence, at the beginning of the first lecture in a volume, the essence of the work. Ungenerous criticism, whatever effect it may produce on the minds of those who are accustomed to think only by rules prescribed to them by others, is, so far as my personal feelings are concerned, a pointless shaft: and in respect to the remarks of those who really detect and expose the errors of the work, (and I am not vain enough to imagine that any production of mine is without defects,) I shall be the first to acknowledge my obligations, and to say, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend!" The three years which have elapsed since my last publication, have not rendered me less diffident of my own powers, nor more callous to the representations of wiser and abler pens than my own. I only ask to be permitted to state my own plans, and to be judged fairly by the pretensions advanced in them; and I shall then be unfeignedly thankful for either instruction or admonition.

Parables have been a favourite subject in the pulpit ; and some useful treatises on them have issued from the press. That they should have commanded so much attention, and excited so many efforts, cannot be surprising to any person of taste and feeling. Appealing to the most enchanting faculty of the human mind—the imagination ; and borrowing the beautiful and variegated garb of nature ; they could not fail to interest the understanding, and to win the heart. It may appear presumptuous, when I add, that I have not yet seen any exposition of them which exactly meets my views : and how far I have myself succeeded in elucidating them, it remains for the Public to decide. *Keech*, who held a distinguished place in the religious world as a divine, nevertheless yielded so much to the fashion of his age, which was to *spiritualize* every thing, and to press every circumstance in the imagery to support the most important doctrines, that he has presented a voluminous production, interesting only for it's general truths, but failing alike to afford any elucidation of Parables, from their own

immediate object, or the customs of the country to which they distinctly allude. *Bragge* has written two volumes of good, but dull sermons, which might as well be accommodated to any other form of instruction as to Parables. He has seized the general scope, upon which he has expatiated, without reference (or with a very subordinate reference) to the points of imagery, or local scenes, introduced in the allegory. Admirable works, elucidating certain texts and passages by oriental customs, have been written by Calmet, by Harmer, by Burder, and last, but not least, by Calmet's incomparable Editor, and author of the Fragments, and of Scripture Illustrated: still these have applied their researches to a general illustration of the entire volume, and not to Parables specifically. Other writers might be enumerated, who have all, and each of them, contributed, more or less, to the development of this interesting subject: some with a greater attention to doctrinal points involved in this mode of ancient teaching; and others only to the artificial arrangement or the moral tendency of the figure, unjustly

excluding it's grand doctrinal principles. Some, no doubt, have happily combined these. *Jones's* volume, on the Figurative Language of the Scriptures, is doubtless an excellent work, fettered too much, perhaps, by a peculiar system ; but this also is general in it's design, and illustrates Parables only in common with other kinds of Biblical imagery. The grand *principle* upon which the present volume proceeds (whether it be true or false) is, that every parable has *one* leading sentiment, which is to be determined by the *occasion* on which it was spoken, or by the direct *application* which our Lord himself makes of it;—that this sentiment is clothed in language appropriate to the image selected ;—that the sentiment often comprises more than the figure can express ; and, on the other hand, that many circumstances are included, to preserve the integrity of the image, which do not belong to the principle, and which must not be too closely run in the exposition. This method avoids all *spiritualization* in the interpretation ; and refuses it even in the application. The doctrines or precepts advanced, are such as evidently were held

in view by our Lord himself: and the application of them always proceeds upon the demonstration of an actual analogy between the circumstances and character of the hearers, or readers, of these Lectures, and those of the persons to whom the parables were immediately addressed. The *plan*, therefore, of all the Lectures is uniform, and in strict conformity to the principle advanced. Whatever shape the discussion may assume, the following are the *three* objects held in view in each discourse. *First*, distinctly to state the occasion of each parable, and from it to demonstrate the sentiment intended to be established. *Secondly*, to pass over all it's parts, as bearing upon oriental customs; and to exhibit from them the peculiarity, the beauty, and the integrity of the imagery. *Thirdly*, to apply the doctrines, the precepts, the admonitions, or the censures of each parable to ourselves, by discovering the principles comprehended in it, and the analogy between our character and situation, and that of the parties addressed on each occasion.—Such is the plan: and it is

tendered to a generous Public; on the part of the author, with much diffidence as to it's execution, and sincere prayers for it's success.

W. B. C.

Sept. 1. 1815.

LIST OF SCRIPTURES

ILLUSTRATED IN THIS VOLUME.

GENESIS.

	Page
ch. i. 11, 12	263
xviii. 7	332, 333
xxiv. 63	398
xxvii. 9	332
xxxi. 38--40	419
xlix. 9, 13, 17, }	85
19, 20, 22 }	

NUMBERS.

ch. xxi. 9	56, 57
----------------------	--------

JUDGES.

ch. ix. 7--20	99--103
xiv. 14--18	96

1 SAMUEL.

ch. xvii. 34, 35.	419
---------------------------	-----

2 SAMUEL.

ch. i. 19--27	24
xii. 1--7	105-108
xiv. 5--7	104, 105

1 KINGS.

ch. iv. 25	491
ix. 7	96

2 KINGS.

ch. xiv. 9	103, 104
----------------------	----------

2 CHRONICLES.

ch. xiii. 5	213
xxxvi. 14--16	496

JOB.

	Page
<i>passim</i>	31--33
ch. ix. 9	} 47
xxxviii. 31, 32 }	

PSALMS.

Ps. xxiii. 1--4	399-401
xlix. 6--11, 13, }	345, 346
14, 16-20 }	
li.	107, 108
lxix. 9	86
lxxx. 8--16	22, 23
xc. 5	85, 86
xcii. 13--15	260
ciii. 13, 14	340
cxxiii. 1, 2	81

PROVERBS.

ch. viii. 1--4	441, 442
ix. 1--5	299, 300
xxxi. 2	336

ECCLESIASTES.

ch. ix. 1, 2	229, 230
xii. 1--7	108-110

SOLOMON'S SONG.

ch. v. 10	520, 521
---------------------	----------

ISAIAH.

ch. v. 1--7	271-273
xiv. 4--20	25-27
xvi. 10	491
xx. 2--5	82

LIST OF SCRIPTURES.

ch. xl. 11	Page 405
xlii. 3	86

JEREMIAH.

ch. xlii. 1--10	82, 83
---------------------------	--------

EZEKIEL.

ch. iv.	83
xxvii.	87
xxxiv. 1--16	401-404
— 17--24	404, 405

MICAH.

ch. iv. 3, 4	491
------------------------	-----

NAHUM.

ch. i. 2--7	19--21
-----------------------	--------

HABAKKUK.

ch. iii. 2--19	35--37
--------------------------	--------

MATTHEW.

ch. iii. 10	264, 265
v. 25, 26	204-207
vii. 16--20	262-264
— 21--27	530-532
viii. 11	366, 367
xi. 7--11	481
— 12	478, &c.
xii. 20	86
xiii. 3-9, & 18-23	152-164
— 10--15	131-134
— 24-30, & }	164-173
36--43	
— 31, 32	148-151
— 33	144-146
— 44--46	146, 147
— 47--50	147, 148
— 52	151
xv. 13	259, 260
xviii. 8, 9	177-181

ch. xviii. 21--35	Page 185-197
xx. 1--16	435-446
xxi. 23--27	429, 430
— 28--32	428-435
— 33--41	488
— 42--45	498
xxii. 2--14	293-303
xxiv. 32, 33	266
— 45--51	512, &c.
xxv. 1--13	515-528
— 14--30	{ 457-465 468-476

MARK.

ch. iv. 26--29	256-259
xi. 12--14 & 20	267-269

LUKE.

ch. i. 78, 79	65
vii. 31--35	181-184
— 36--50	197-202
x. 25--29	215
— 30--37	216-226
xi. 5--9	381-383
— 53, 54	460
xii. 1--5	461
— 15--21	243-254
— 16	461
— 35	453, 454
xiii. 1--5	269-271
— 6--9	266-281
— 28, 29	366, 367
— 31--33	462
xiv. 7--11	285-290
— 12--14	291, 292
— 15	292
— 16--24	{ 297-300 303-314
— 28--33	207-212
— 31, 32	461

LIST OF SCRIPTURES.

	Page
ch. xiv. 34, 35 . . .	212-214
xy. 1, 2 . . .	320
— 3--6 . . .	325, 326
— 7 . . .	321-325
— 8--10 . . .	326, 327
— 11--32 . . .	327-343
xvi. 1--14 . . .	231-241
— 1, &c. . . .	362
— 19--31 . . .	349-370
xvii. 7--10 . . .	450-455
xviii. 1--8 . . .	375-381
— 9--14 . . .	383-394
xix. 12--27 . . .	455-476
xxiii. 31 . . .	262
— 43 . . .	365, 366

JOHN.

ch. iii. 14, 15 . . .	56, 57
— 29 . . .	518, 519
viii. 6, 7 . . .	84
ix. 2, 3 . . .	270
— 39 . . .	133
x. 1--18 . . .	406-421
xiii. 17 . . .	529, 530
xv. 1--5 . . .	260, 261
xvi. 29 . . .	95, 96

1 CORINTHIANS.

ch. i. 26--29 . . .	228, 229
xv. 40--42 . . .	60-62

GALATIANS.

	Page
ch. iv. 22--31 . . .	66, 67

COLOSSIANS.

ch. iii. 22--25, & iv. 1 . . .	515
--------------------------------	-----

1 TIMOTHY.

ch. vi. 17--19 . . .	239
----------------------	-----

HEBREWS.

ch. ix. 23, 24, & x. 1 . . .	66
xi. 13 . . .	304
— 36--38 . . .	302
xii. 22--24 . . .	68

JAMES.

ch. iii. 12 . . .	263
iv. 13--17 . . .	250
v. 1--5 . . .	346-349

1 PETER.

ch. iv. 17, 18 . . .	262
----------------------	-----

2 PETER.

ch. iii. 10, 11 . . .	514, 515
-----------------------	----------

REVELATION.

ch. xix. 9 . . .	528, 529
xxi. 22 . . .	64, 65

LIST OF AUTHORS AND WORKS.

EITHER QUOTED, OR REFERRED TO, IN THESE LECTURES.

Sallust.	Guyse.
Plotinus.	Prideaux.
Plato.	Whitby.
Proclus' Commentary on Plato.	Lightfoot.
Pindar.	Massillon.
Clement of Alexandria.	Ossian.
Philolaus, preserved by Clem.	Calmet.
Alex.	Fragments to Calmet.
Pythagoras.	Scripture Illustrated.
Synesius.	Gale.
Pletho.	Le Pluche.
Empedocles.	Jones.
Hierocles.	Henley.
Aristotle.	Baron du Tott.
Homer.	Sale's Korān.
Pliny.	Dr. Clarke's Travels.
Josephus.	Norden's Travels.
St. Ambrose.	Bruce's Travels.
Hilary.	Aaron Hill's Travels.
Chrysostom.	Hasselquist.
Virgil.	Thevenot.
Lowth.	Linnaeus.
Blair.	Parkhurst.
Colden's History.	Harmer.
Geddes' Translation.	Halhed's Code of Gentoo Laws.
Newcome's Translation.	Asiatic Researches.
Watts.	A Treatise on the Eleusinian
Doddridge.	and Bacchic Mysteries.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

ON THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE.

Hosea xii. 10.—*I have also spoken by the Prophets; and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the Prophets.* - - - - PAGE 1

LECTURE II.

ON SCRIPTURE TYPES.

Galatians iv. 24.—*Which things are an allegory.* - - - 38

LECTURE III.

ON SCRIPTURE PARABLES.

Ps. lxxviii. 2, 3.—*I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old; which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.* - - - 73

LECTURE IV.

ON THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF OUR LORD'S PARABLES.

Matt. xiii. 10.—*Why speakest thou unto them in parables?* 116

LECTURE V.

THE SOWER.

	Page
Matt. xiii. 18.— <i>Hear ye, therefore, the parable of the Sower.</i>	141

LECTURE VI.

THE DEBTORS.

Matt. vi. 12.— <i>And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.</i>	174
--	-----

LECTURE VII.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Luke x. 29.— <i>And who is my neighbour?</i>	203
--	-----

LECTURE VIII.

THE RICH WORLDLING.

Luke xii. 21.— <i>So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.</i>	227
--	-----

LECTURE IX.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

Matt. xxiv. 32.— <i>Now learn a parable of the Fig-tree.</i>	255
--	-----

LECTURE X.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

Matt. xxii. 14.— <i>For many are called, but few are chosen.</i>	282
--	-----

LECTURES

SCRIPTURE PARABLES.

LECTURE I.

ON THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE.

HOSEA XII. 10.

I have also spoken by the Prophets; and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the Prophets.

THE monuments of human greatness yield in succession to the destroying influence of Time. Whatever is magnificent, or beautiful, or excellent, possesses only a temporary influence, and commands only a transient admiration : in the course of a few years, or at most a few ages, imagination is required to supply departed graces, and genius mourns over extinguished glory. The combinations of society have produced astonishing effects:

to man in his collective strength nothing is impossible, and few things appear even difficult: he has dared every thing; and he has achieved so much as amply to repay him for his labours. The extent of sovereignty which he grasped, when he stretched his sceptre over numberless provinces, and planted the line of his dominion from sea to sea, demonstrated the unbounded character of his ambition, and the incalculable variety of his resources. The stupendous productions of art, on which he inscribed his victories, and which he intended as the pillars of his fame, have combined and exhibited all that is sublime in conception, and all that is graceful in execution. Could he have attached durability to these, his triumph would have been complete—he would have bound Time to his chariot-wheels, and rendered the monuments of his greatness coeval with the existence of the heavenly bodies. But that irresistible power has dissolved all the associations which he formed, and overthrown all the structures which he raised. He touched the seats of empire with his commanding sceptre, and the thrones of the earth crumbled into dust. Scarcely was the head of the monarch laid beneath the sod, before his dominion perished. Scarcely the active hand of the warrior stiffened in death, ere the provinces which he had won revolted, and another hero arose—to run the same career of danger and oppression, to mark out the

globe for himself, and to resign, in his turn, a crown so hardly achieved. Of Nineveh—of Babylon—we have no remains: of Egypt we have only characters of degradation: of Rome there exist but the melancholy fragments of ruined grandeur. With the respective empires, the monuments of their power have been defaced or destroyed. Time has wasted the Gardens—extinguished the Pharos—prostrated the Colossus—dilapidated the Temple—unravell'd the Labyrinth—broken down the Mausoleum upon it's dead—and left the Pyramids to mark the progress of his effacing hand passing over them, and to deride the folly of human ambition, when it's works outlive the name of their projectors.

When these exhibitions of human ability are swept away from the earth, or so much of them only remains as to awaken sentiments of pity more lively than those of admiration, History restores the empire, and Science rears the fallen cities anew. Again Palmyra rises from among her ruined temples and tottering pillars: again Rome assumes the sceptre of the world, and binds distant nations to her throne. The work of the destroyer is but half effected, while the record of former times remains. The heroes of antiquity live over again, and the great monarchies burst forth afresh in all their primeval splendour. Letters seem to promise that immortality which

neither arms could command, nor arts acquire. The blaze of war is quickly extinguished :—it is indeed a devouring fire ; but it is short-lived, in proportion to its fierceness. Like the beacon which it kindled to affright the nations, it burned for a night, and expired upon its own ashes. But the inspiration of the Poet is a lambent flame, playing around the imagination from age to age, and shedding its mild and brilliant light upon distant lands and times, when the consuming element of discord is forgotten. The magic pen of the Historian raises from their resting-place the departed shades of princes and warriors, and, embodying them in their proper forms, brings them again to act their part upon the stage of time, fills the world with new agents, and enables us to judge of their characters with ease and accuracy ; while we feel ourselves sheltered from the miseries, at the same time that we ascertain the extent, of their policy and achievements. Yet this mausoleum of former greatness rears its majestic head only for a season. In vain the poet and the historian promise themselves, or the subjects of their eulogy, "immortality" ; in vain they flatter themselves that they have erected a monument more durable than brass, loftier than the royal elevation of the pyramids ; which neither the wearing shower, the unavailing tempest, the innumerable succession of years, nor the flight

of seasons, shall be able to demolish : they dream but of a fame that shall move round the circle of time. Many such a fond enthusiast has floated down the stream, without leaving even the wreck of his name as a memorial : And of those who have stood highest on the records of renown, a part of their works has perished. Time has not spared even Science. The precious fragments of ancient writings resemble the ruins of some great empire : enough remains to delight, to impress, to instruct ; but these remnants cause us to lament the more bitterly that which is lost to us, as an evil irreparable, and afford a lesson more ample of human vanity than of human distinction.

In the mean while, our attention is directed to the contemplation of a Volume which exhibiting all these characters of greatness, is not liable to these accidents. A faithful history of all the incidents of time is furnished from it's ample stores of wisdom and knowledge. The secret springs of those facts which alone it is the province of all other histories to detail, are laid open to the judgment. In most cases we can only observe events, — we are profoundly ignorant of their causes : we can only infer motives from facts ; and our conclusions are often equally rash and erroneous. Here the plan, and it's execution, are brought before us at the same time : the

deeds of the monarch, the politician, or the warrior, are linked with his intentions; and we can estimate him the more justly, because we know not only what he accomplished, but also what he designed. Here, the cause of the decay of empires, and the defeat of armies, is developed. We see what corrosive drop, falling upon the throne, occasioned it to moulder away; what secret influence, working upon the hearts of men, disbanded their forces, and dissolved their political combinations. Here, while, in common with other records, the rise and progress of human science is traced—and light is thrown far back upon remote ages, not penetrated by reason, philosophy, or history—the works of art, and the inspirations of genius, are recovered and presented; the secret germ of destruction is disclosed; and an adequate reason for every change, and every event, is assigned. Over the narrative, every charm is shed that can interest. Truth guided the pen, and infinite Wisdom illuminated the page. Whatever of sublimity in conception—grace in composition—superiority in intellect—delicacy in feeling—majesty in execution—attracts us in the writings of the Ancients, is to be found in greater purity, in more abundant fulness, in higher perfection, in the Bible. And Time respects it:—years have diminished nothing of it's information, abated nothing of it's force, dete-

riorated nothing of it's excellence. Accident has no power over it. Persecution has been unable to injure it. The most vigorous attacks have served but to demonstrate it's invulnerability. It has been regarded with different feelings by different characters. It has suffered nothing from hostility; it has borrowed nothing from friendship. It stands unaltered, uninjured; like it's Author, 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'

To this interesting and unparalleled Volume we have directed our attention, with humility and gratitude, in a series of Lectures, upon it's various points of evidence. We have examined the *Facts* which it contains, and compared them with corresponding testimonies to be yet found in those fragments of ancient records which remain. We have examined it's *Predictions*; and compared them with those subsequent events, stated by other historians, by which they have been accomplished. We have examined it's *Miracles*; and compared them both with absolute evidence, and the probabilities of the respective cases suggested by reason. We are now to look at it's style, and manner of instruction; to supply a link between it's external and internal evidences; and by an attention to *SCRIPTURE PARABLES*, at once to trace some of it's most important doctrines and precepts, and to mark the excellence

of it's method of communicating and enforcing them. And if in this discussion, especially the leading parts of it, we shall seem to dwell on the outward garb of Revelation, and it's mere circumstances, too much, let it be remembered, that this is done for the purpose of afterwards producing to greater advantage it's sublime and eternal truths.

The Bible, so far as composition and expressions are concerned, may be, like any other volume, a subject of critical investigation. It is necessary that it should be so, to remove obscurities which may arise from the use of any words of doubtful import, or a reference to the manners of an age remote, and of a country whose appearance and productions differ from our own. And, in regard to the style of the book, it's imagery, it's accuracy, it's sublimity, it will not yield to any, the most celebrated writings; it will not find it's equal among any, the most-admired productions of antiquity. Let us fix upon any quality for which these have been most esteemed, and it is easy to prove that the Scriptures possess that very quality in a pre-eminent degree. Or, if the subject of applause be the combination of many excellencies, a greater and more magnificent assemblage of these very excellencies may be produced without effort from the sacred volume. A spirit of infidelity alone can deny this: and

such a spirit alone can account for the neglect with which the Bible is treated by men of taste and literature, even if it had no other claim upon their attention than it's transcendent merit as a literary composition.

Thus regarded, it is easy to trace the cast of mind of each of it's writers. All of them inspired by the same Spirit, treating the same subject, acting under a divine influence uniformly—each exemplifies, in the peculiarity of his style, the character of his mind. Who can fail to perceive that the character of the mind of Isaiah was sublimity? He is always an eagle in his flight—never losing sight of the sun—never stooping in his majestic career. Stripped of his poetical garb, and arrayed in the plainest dress, by a literal translation into another language than his own, his book retains it's grandeur, allayed, yet easily distinguishable; and he moves with a princely port under all the disadvantages of an humble investment. The mind of Jeremiah was cast in the mould of tenderness. Far less sublime than the prophet whose writings preceded him, he is much more pathetic; and it is impossible to read the language in which he deplores the ruin of his country, without feeling our hearts melted, and mingling our tears with those of the patriot. Ezekiel, possessing neither of these qualities to the same extent with the others, is distinguished for

the force and fire of his appeals*. Neither of these is greater than the other, as an inspired writer; all were influenced by the same spirit of truth, all were clothed with the same authority, all demand the same submission to their awful messages; but each displayed the quality of his own mind, in the character of his style. Criticism, as applied to the composition of the Bible, can reach no further; it must not presume to meddle with it's information; it respects only so much as is human in it's manner, and can never summon to it's tribunal that which is spiritual in it's import. It is a part of the unsearchable character of the Divine communications, that God should have imparted to men all the authority of Revelation in point of substance; that he should have dictated the very expressions in which his will should be conveyed; yet that this inspiration should have destroyed and altered nothing of the character of the human mind, nor have turned the feelings out of their original channel;—that he should, by different men, have conveyed to the world the same truths, under all that variety of method which could not fail naturally to attach itself to minds of various sizes and structure.

* See Lowth, *De Sacra Poesi Hebræorum*

The present Course of Lectures will comprise eighteen subjects of discussion; of which four will be preliminary, to elucidate the general principles of Figurative Language, and the peculiar character of Scripture allegories; and fourteen will furnish examples to illustrate these positions, gathered from the Parables of Jesus Christ, as most perfect in their structure, and most important in their objects. These will be delivered in the following order:

1. On the Figurative Language of Scripture.
2. On Scripture Types.
3. On Scripture Parables.
4. On the peculiar character of our LORD's Parables.
5. The Sower.
6. The Debtors.
7. The Good Samaritan.
8. The Rich Worldling.
9. The Barren Fig-tree.
10. The Marriage Feast.
11. The Prodigal Son.
12. The Rich Man and Lazarus.
13. The Pharisee and Publican.
14. The Good Shepherd.
15. The Labourers in the Vineyard.
16. The Talents.
17. The Husbandmen.
18. The Ten Virgins.

These examples I have selected as the principal parables delivered by our Lord during his ministry; and, so far as it can be ascertained, nearly in the order in which they were spoken. Attention has also been paid, in this arrangement, so to class them, as that they may comprise his other parables, tending to illustrate similar points of doctrine or of practice, and presenting corresponding imagery, but which are not of sufficient consideration to demand a separate discussion. I trust, in the conclusion, it will be found that nothing material, in this method of our Lord's teaching, has been neglected or overlooked in these discourses.

The present Lecture, being merely introductory, will be the most general of the Course, even of those Lectures which are preliminary; and is intended to engage your reflections.

ON THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE.

It will be evident that such a proposition must lead to a general examination of the style of the Bible, as tending to illustrate the peculiar mode of teaching which is hereafter to be discussed.

1. *Figurative language in general* should be traced in it's origin and uses, that we may see what the Scriptures have in common with other writings. By these means, we shall best develope,

in the issue, what is peculiar to the inspired volume.

As to its *origin*.—Figurative expressions arose out of necessity. In the ruder states of society, men were compelled, receiving their ideas from sensible objects, to convey them to others by referring to those objects which awakened them; and, destitute of words to express the emotions of the mind, they were obliged to appeal to such material things as appeared to them to present any analogy to the passion or disposition which they desired to communicate. Besides this necessity, such language is best adapted to that ardour of feeling, that force of imagination, which are well known to characterize men under such circumstances. Subsequently, language becomes more extensive, and expressions more simple; the understanding enlarges; the exuberance of imagination is retrenched, the ardour of the passions restrained—the style will correspond with the correction of the feelings.

These observations are not founded upon probable inferences from such a state of society, but upon ample facts establishing the position. It is well known that poetry, which, from its nature, is the language of the imagination and

See Dr. Blair.

of the passions, and which abounds in figures, is more ancient than any prose writings extant. It is also certain, that savages always speak in language highly figurative. While the appeal is made to the eye, in conveying their intentions by planting the tree, or burying the axe, or knitting the knot of friendship,—their expressions are as singularly metaphorical as their actions are strikingly symbolical. An evidence of this is furnished in Colden's History of the Five Indian Nations. A treaty of peace, on their part, with this country, was accompanied by an address of their Chiefs, expressed in this strongly figurative style:—“We are happy in having buried under ground the red axe, that has so often been dyed with the blood of our brethren. Now, in this fort, we inter the axe, and plant the tree of Peace. We plant a tree, whose top will reach the sun; and it's branches spread abroad, so that it shall be seen afar off. May it's growth never be stifled and choked; but may it shade both your country and our's with it's leaves. Let us make fast it's roots, and extend them to the utmost of your colonies. If the French should come to shake this tree, we would know it by the motion of it's roots reaching into our country. May the great Spirit allow us to rest in tranquillity upon our

" mats, and never again dig up the axe to cut
 " down the tree of Peace! Let the earth be trod
 " hard over it, where it lies buried. Let a strong
 " stream run under the pit, to wash the evil away
 " out of our sight and remembrance. The fire
 " that had long burned in Albany is extinguished.
 " The bloody bed is washed clean, and the tears
 " are wiped from our eyes. We now renew the
 " covenant chain of friendship. Let it be kept
 " bright and clean as silver, and not suffered to
 " contract any rust. Let not any one pull away
 " his arm from it."

But when the necessity no longer existed, the
 use of figurative language was retained in polished
 society, under due correction, as an ornament of
 style, and as calculated to afford at once facility
 of expression, felicity of elucidation, and a vivid
 recollection of interesting subjects. In the Scrip-
 tures it is employed, not merely for purposes of
 ornament, but for another reason, which will be
 more largely detailed in the succeeding Lecture,
 and which, to state briefly now, was—the impos-
 sibility of our forming any conception of spiritual
 and unseen things; but through the medium of
 visible and sensible objects. *But the French should*
 312. *Eastern language abounds in imagery;*
 and the Bible, in conveying its sublime in-
 structions to mankind, accommodated its expres-

sions to the feelings, habits, and associations of the people to whom it was at first committed. Here we trace the same wisdom which appeared in suffering every prophet to retain his own characteristic style; in adapting the instruction to the customs of the first possessors of Revelation, so as to mark distinctly, in all ages, where it arose, without destroying, in any degree, that universality essential to such a grant, and without even diminishing its effect among other nations. It is impossible not to know that this sun rose in the East; but his light is not therefore less precious in his circuit over the earth. That Eastern nations should exhibit in their language a greater exuberance of figurative expressions, seems to arise from the richer features of their country, and the surpassing magnificence of their customs. The mind—the imagination at least—takes much of its colour from surrounding objects. Those who reside amidst bold and awful scenery, display more of the sublime in their habit of thinking, consequently in their mode of expression, than those who have always inhabited tamer countries. Every thing in nature in the Eastern world is in profusion—every thing is grand—every thing is luxuriant: the spirit, dwelling in the midst of such objects, assumes a corresponding character, and conveys its feelings

LECTURE XI.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Page

Luke xv. 7.—*I say unto you, that likewise, joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.* 351

LECTURE XII.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

James v. 5.—*Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton: ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.* 344

LECTURE XIII.

THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.

Luke xviii. 9.—*And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.* 371

LECTURE XIV.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

John x. 11.—*I am the Good Shepherd.* 395

LECTURE XV.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

Matt. xx. 16.—*So the last shall be first, and the first last.* 422

LECTURE XVI.

THE TALENTS.

Luke xvi. 5.—*How much owest thou unto my Lord?* - Page 447

LECTURE XVII.

THE HUSBANDMEN.

Matt. xxi. 43.—*Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* - - - 477

LECTURE XVIII.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

John xiii. 17.—*If ye KNOW these things, happy are ye. if ye DO them!* - - - - - 508



ANALYSIS

OF

THE LECTURES.

LECTURE I.

ON THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE.

MONUMENTS of human greatness perishable—Influence of time upon the face of nature—Restoration of departed beauty and greatness by history and science—their influence in this respect still only partial—Grandeur and claims of the scriptures—Recapitulation of the objects of former Lectures.—In what respects the Bible is a subject of critical investigation—Different styles of it's writers—Sublimity of Isaiah—Tenderness of Jeremiah—Force of Ezekiel—consistent with inspiration—Plan and subjects of the present Lectures—Four introductory—Subject of this first—The FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE of the Scriptures—Figurative language in general traced in it's origin and uses—Figurative expressions arose out of necessity—abound in the ruder states of society—example from Colden's History of the Five Indian Nations—Figurative expressions retained in polished society as ornamental—Eastern language abounds in imagery—arising from the magnificent scenery of the country—Images vary in different countries—examples of beautiful figures employed in the scriptures, arising from the features of Palestine—The descriptive language of the scriptures peculiarly sublime—example from the Prophet Nahum—The allegorical language of the scriptures singularly beautiful, and it's images correctly preserved—example from the allegory of the 80th Psalm—The poetical language of the scriptures abounds in imagery—examples, the Song of Solomon, the Book of Job, and the Lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan—Personification is another part of figurative language in which the scriptures excel—example from Isaiah, the fall of the King of Babylon—Apostrophe, exemplified in our Lord's impassioned address to Jerusalem—From the grandeur and simplicity of the Bible, the absurdity of those claims, advanced by the deluded or the artful, of late years, to inspiration, is inferred—The high pretensions of the Korān to purity of style—that book con-

trasted with the Bible—Conclusion. The Notes contain Extracts from Dr. Watts' Preface to his Lyric Poems, detailing the sublimity of the images of the Bible—and an example from the prophet Habakkuk, revised and amended by Bishop Newcome's translation.

PAGE 1—30. NOTES 31—37.

LECTURE II.

ON SCRIPTURE TYPES.

Beautiful sentiment of antiquity, that all the world is a parable—to how many it presents it's hidden lore of wisdom in vain—As a parable, the book of nature needed an interpreter, and finds it in revelation—In the parable of nature and time, there are many things which God alone can interpret—What figurative language is to the ear, TYPES are to the eye—The subject of the Lecture, SCRIPTURE TYPES—On *types in general*—their birth-place, for the most part, Egypt—the *origin* of some more remote—possessing an antiquity not to be traced—examples, the symbol of fire, prevailed through the East, thence passed to the Western world—found also in Peru, and other parts of America—holy and perpetual fire, prescribed by Moses to the Jews—the signs of the zodiac—their probable origin in Chaldea—intention of these signs, before the precession of the equinoctial points removed them out of their proper places—Criticism on a passage in Job, and on the terms, Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, Mazaroth, and Chambers of the South—These symbols in Egypt arose out of *necessity*—from the peculiarity of their climate, and the sudden and important inundations of the Nile—philosophical causes of these phenomena, the features of which are detailed—*Example* of the necessity in which ancient types originated, and of the idolatry to which they subsequently conduced—The *Dog-star*—it's uses, names, and moment of appearance in connection with the overflow of the river—*Symbols* necessary to perpetuate these observations—Origin of the Hawk, the Anubis, and the Sphinx, with the Egyptians—introduced by the Phœnicians into Europe—Fables arising thence of the Grecian poets—copied by the Romans—Symbols little understood even by the Grecian philosophers—clearly the origin of Grecian and Roman mythology—Under the idolatry of Greece, Plato sought moral and philosophical principles—and deduced them from the Eleusinian mysteries—Indian Deities—their multiplied members so many attributes of the Divinity—or effects of a natural cause—Grecian sculpture retrenched what was deemed redundant in Egyptian symbols, and thus destroyed their typical import—Earliest characters of writing, were types—originally rude historical pictures, such as were found with the Mexicans—then, *hieroglyphics*—example, the symbol of the serpent—the word *Heva* signifies *life*, and a *serpent*—This symbol in connection with the Deity—with eternity—with Esculapius—with the brazen serpent, &c.—From hieroglyphics, writing advanced to simple arbitrary marks—the Chinese character—Figures or ciphers used in Europe, borrowed from Arabia, or more probably primarily from India—Scheme of an universal character—invention of letters as marks for sound—On *scripture types*—wherein they differ from parables—relate to things spiritual,

which can be illustrated only by those which are natural—example from the Corinthians—different glories of celestial and terrestrial bodies—*necessity* of types—reasoning of Jones—types but imperfect symbols—Types *borrowed*, in the Scriptures, from various sources—from *nature*—from the *law*—from *miraculous operations*—from *historical events*—from *eminent persons*—from distinguished *places*—Remaining types, called *Sacraments*—two-fold, Baptism and the Lord's Supper—The important *uses* of types—Danger of symbols, when separated from their objects—the extreme of stripping religious worship too naked, guarded against—censure passed upon *spiritualizing* historical incidents and plain facts—Conclusion. The Notes contain one or two quotations from, and general references to, Plotinus, Plato, Proclus, Virgil, Pindar, Clement of Alexandria, Philolaus, Pythagoras, Synesius, Pletho, Empedocles, and Hierocles, on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries.

PAGE 38—70. NOTES 71—72.

LECTURE III.

ON SCRIPTURE PARABLES.

Difficulty in tracing customs to their origin, from the brevity of human existence—Antediluvians supposed to excel in science—The experience of former ages lost, through the imperfection of the symbols containing it—example, the impossibility of deciphering the monuments of Egyptian science—the monuments themselves perish—the things signified by these types remain—the orbs of heaven and the seasons are unaltered—Beautiful address of Ossian to the Sun—The long continuance of the order of nature has given an occasion to the triumphs of infidelity—The actual approximation of all things to a close—to improve this part is the end of all these discussions, however varied their character. Scripture PARABLES the present subject—Ancient *signs*—connecting types with parables—It appears to be the custom of the East to *converse by signs*—examples, 123d Psalm, and a fact related by Baron du Tott—This practice points out the import of those signs employed by the prophets—to illustrate the various objects of their mission—examples—from Isaiah—Jeremiah—especially Ezekiel—his type of the siege—our Lord's writing on the ground, when the adulterous woman was brought before him, probably a similar sign.—Another custom of the East, a *play upon words*—and that upon the most solemn occasions—examples from the predictions of dying Jacob concerning his sons—of our Lord's declaration in reference to Peter—*Metaphorical terms* are frequently blended with general expressions—examples from the Turks—the Korān—the Bible—The most awful events are frequently predicted in a *metaphorical form*—the metaphorical ship of Tyre, by Ezekiel—*Parables in general*—their *origin*, appears to have been with the Hebrews—Greek names of idols may be traced to an Egyptian or Hebraic derivation—Affinity of the Egyptian to the Hebrew tongue—The *prevalence* of parables through all antiquity—Observation of Aristotle—Homer exemplified in his poem the Grecian mythology—Hesiod—Philostratus, Æsop, Pythagoras, Plato, &c.—Syrian parables—Aristotle exploded the mode of teaching by fables—The *uses* made of parable various and

dissimilar—*Abuses*—to cover ignorance—to monopolize knowledge—*Advantages*—to excite inquiry—to impress truth upon the memory—to exercise the mind constantly—*Disadvantages*—it obscured truth too much—witness the shameless rites of Paganism—*Scripture parables*—the term of *various* signification—*Proverbs*—such as of Solomon—*Poetry*—such as of Job and Balaam—*Riddles*—such as of Sampson—*A term of reproach*—as in the threatened destruction of Solomon's temple—*The purity* of scripture parables—*The uses* of parables in the Bible—to *amuse*—to *rouse*—to *censure*—to *instruct*—*Examples* from the scriptures—the parable of Jotham—to *censure*—*Criticism on wine* cheering *god and man*—The parable of Jehoash, king of Israel—a mark of contempt—The parable of the woman of Tekoah—*persuasion*—The parable of Nathan—*reproof*—The allegory of Solomon on old age—*instruction*—Objections of infidelity arise, for the most part, from ignorance of ancient, and especially of oriental customs—*Conclusion*. The Notes contain an instance of Lycophron's borrowing from the Septuagint—and examples of Grecian philosophers and gods being referable to Egyptian types—their names being also manifestly of Hebrew origin.

PAGE 73—111. NOTES 112—115.

LECTURE IV.

THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF OUR LORD'S PARABLES.

Something peculiarly striking in our Lord's mode of teaching—compared with what was fabled of Orpheus—and what was true of Demosthenes—and of Cicero—Testimony of the Evangelists to the character, as well as effect, of his preaching—contrasted with the teaching of the scribes—enforced upon preachers—*THE PECULIAR CHARACTER* of our LORD'S PARABLES—*The object* of our Lord's parables—*The correspondence* of his teaching, in this way, with the general object of parables, and the purposes peculiarly his own—He intended to *instruct*—He employed Parables for the purpose of *reproof*—To secure his *personal safety*, and to *surprise* the consciences of his hearers, he spake to them in parables—Question arising here, as to concealment of the truth—Jesus did *not conceal*, he veiled his intention only for a season, until his images had fixed the principles intended to be conveyed by them in the heart—*Censure of violence* in conveying the truth—A peculiarity in the object of our Lord's parables, in respect of some persons, was to *punish*—justification of this design—*The character* of our Lord's parables—*beauty*—*simplicity*—*infinite importance*—*variety* and *extent*—*The effect* of our Lord's parables—a *more extensive influence* than others—an *universality of application*—an *imperishable ascendancy* upon the heart of man—*Conclusion*.

PAGE 116—139.

LECTURE V.

THE SOWER, AND THE TARES AND THE WHEAT.

Peculiar advantage of parables to minds incapable of abstract reasoning—Spiritual things embodied and presented to the senses,

by a comparison stated between them and things visible—Minor similitudes, borrowed from vegetation, or from familiar circumstances—connected with parables of a more complete and extensive character—the *leaven*—the *treasure* hidden in a field—the *net* cast into the sea—the grain of *mustard-seed*—the *Sinapi Erucoides* intended—the *householder*, bringing forth things new and old—Subject—The parable of the Sower—Every parable has *one* leading sentiment—the sentiment of *this* parable—the *different effects of the gospel upon different characters*—divided into four classes—Comment of our Lord upon this parable—The *seed*, is the word of God—The *sower* is the gospel ministry—himself—his apostles—their successors—The *recipients* of this good seed—Various descriptions of hearers—The *way-side*—incidental hearers—The *stony ground*—superficial hearers—The *thorns*—worldly hearers—The *good ground*—those whose hearts are prepared to receive the truth—The *effects* correspond with the principles—in the occasional hearer—the careless hearer—the worldly hearer—and the christian indeed—In connection with this parable is that of the TARES AND THE WHEAT—the object of which is to illustrate the *mixed state of religious society*—Tares, a noxious plant, resembling the *darnel* of our corn-fields—described in it's appearance and pernicious qualities—The image comprises every variety of character among mankind, considered as destitute of real religion—Respecting the tares and the wheat—the righteous and the wicked, the parable marks *their present union*—It develops the *character* of this union—it supports a similarity of *advantages*—mutual *advancement*—a certain *resemblance*—It is *permitted*—for various reasons as a *test* of character for the *Divine glory*—*Their final separation*—They grow together *only for a season*—The time of separation is the *harvest*—the end of the world—*Their different destinies*—Conclusion.

PAGE 140—173.

LECTURE VI.

THE DEBTORS—TWO PARABLES.

Demosthenes and Æschines—Cicero—St. Paul at Athens—The preacher sent to the Scriptures for matter and manner—as the physician—politician—sculptor—scholar—have each their models—the model of a preacher should be Christ and his apostles—Figurative expressions in connection with this Lecture—*Cutting off the right hand*, and plucking out the *right eye*—it's import—The *children* sitting in the *market-place*—explained and applied—a censure upon morose spirits—upon the censorious, and the unfeeling—THE DEBTORS—The first parable, spoken upon the occasion of Peter's inquiry, "How oft shall I forgive?"—The *sentiment*—that the *pardon which we solicit and receive from the hand of God, requires the exercise of forbearance and forgiveness towards each other*—The parable shews the *conduct* of the *sovereign* towards his *servant*—The Deity is a *sovereign*—the dignity of the personage did not exclude a *personal attention to his concerns*—The *debt of the servant*, discloses the extent of our obligation—The utter *inability* of the debtor to discharge his arrears—The *claims of justice* advanced—censure of slavery—The *grant of pardon* followed the sentence—The *mean and petulant conduct of the servant*

contrasted with the beneficence of the sovereign—The debt of his fellow-servant was *inconsiderable*—the course which he pursued was *violent*—the plea of his debtor was *humble*—the conduct of his ungenerous creditor *unforgiving*—it was reported to his lord—it was followed by a reversion of his own pardon—he was *punished* according to his uncanceled offences—delivered to *tormentors*—Eastern imprisonment and punishments—The *spirit of forgiveness* is hereby inculcated—it is enjoined upon *all men*—without distinction of *rank*—or of *temper*—Injuries of *every description* fall under this act of oblivion—the *extent* of the pardon is carried beyond the symbols of external reconciliation—it must be done from *principle*—not from interest or cowardice. The SECOND parable was spoken in the house of a Pharisee—The *occasion*, a woman washed with her tears, and anointed, the feet of Jesus—The *circumstances* elucidated by Eastern customs, and the recumbent posture adopted at meals in that country—The leading features of this parable accord with those of the preceding one—The *sentiment* is—that in proportion to our sense of obligation to God for the pardon of our sins, will be our love to him—The parable guarded and explained—Conclusion. PAGE 174—202.

LECTURE VII.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

The perfection of human wisdom is to weigh consequences—We must blend prudence with benevolence—we must not live to ourselves alone—Jesus teaches us to weigh consequences in regard to our *responsibility*—We must “agree with our adversary quickly”—God is our *Creditor*—there is a scheme of *conciliation*—no time is to be lost in availing ourselves of it—We must weigh consequences in connection with our *religious profession*—The building of a *tower*—the waging of a *warfare*—the *occasion* of these parables—the flocking of the multitude to hear him—The *conclusion* presses the difficulties and dangers of a religious profession home upon our consciences—The *images* selected, agree with the general delineations of the christian life—their *features* display important truths—In the *tower*, a character is to be built up—in the *war*, a great disproportion is stated between the contending powers—The image of *salt*—denotes the *essential qualities of the christian character*—illustrated by various oriental customs—THE GOOD SAMARITAN—*Occasion*—the inquiry of an expositor of the law—*Sentiment*—the cultivation of a *spirit of active benevolence, without party restrictions*—a touching picture of human misery, arising from the indulgence of the violent passions—two ministers of religion forgetful of their character, and of the duties of their office—the quality of mercy—the lingering hours of pain—The approach and character of the Samaritan—his compassion and active benevolence—his liberality at his departure—Such a friend in need was Jesus—The improvement is, to consider every child of sorrow as our neighbour, and to afford them a prompt and liberal relief—But the nation is called upon, as well as individuals—and Britain has not done her duty to God, herself, or her neighbour, if she rest satisfied until all the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord—Conclusion. PAGE 203—226.

LECTURE VIII.

THE RICH WORLDLING, IN CONNECTION WITH THE UNJUST STEWARD.

The difficulty of properly managing riches—Poverty instrumental in producing the best of characters—prosperity *not*, therefore, any mark of Divine disapprobation—but Solomon's conclusion is just, that circumstances cannot decide character—yet is character often deeply affected by circumstances—Two parables read lessons of importance to the rich, and arraign alike *covetousness*—THE UNJUST STEWARD—Difficulties attend this parable—The general *sentiment*, however, is—that *worldly spirits are better instructed as to their interests, and more prompt to secure them, than religious professors, or even christians themselves*—The *crime* with which this man was charged—explanation—Eastern mode of hiring servants—Gentoo laws, as to hire—these explain some singular remarks of our Lord in applying the parable—The difficulty stated—in two points—the commendation of the unjust steward—answered—The recommendation to make ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness—criticism—exposition—comparison with a passage in the First Epistle to Timothy—the sentiment of the parable pressed home upon different characters—connection of this parable with that (which is the principal) of THE RICH WORLDLING—*sentiment* of this latter, is—the *folly, guilt, and danger, of setting the affections upon the world, and neglecting everlasting concerns*—An examination of his *circumstances*—his *anxieties*—his *projects*—they were secret—vain—selfish—his *presumption* in the estimation of his property—in the formation of his *plans*—in the extent of his calculations—his *punishment*—reflections upon his *folly*—Conclusion.

PAGE 227—254.

LECTURE IX.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

We are again sent abroad into the walks of nature—the illustrations of religious truth, deduced from vegetation, are numerous and striking—Human ignorance, as to the *springing of the seed*, illustrates the *secrecy of divine operation*—compared to a man who *sleeps* while the seed vegetates—the *progression of religious principle*—in the process of vegetation—the *gathering home of the christian*—in the harvest—Professors are represented as *plants*—are supposed to have *advantages*—God himself is the *husbandman*—Jesus is compared to a *vine*—and his disciples to *branches*—implying that religious fruitfulness arises from a *real union* with Christ—The parable of the *green tree* and the *dry*—illustrated from a passage in Bruce's Travels—the appeal of gathering *grapes from thorns*—illustrated by an appeal to Genesis, containing the law that every herb should yield fruit after its kind—The similitude of the *axe* laid to the *root* of the tree—impending judgment—Of the same kind is THE BARREN FIG-TREE—the *fig-tree* frequently selected from the general process of vegetation—the *miracle* of the withering of the fig-tree which Jesus cursed—a *type* corresponding

with this parable—that miracle explained and vindicated—The fig-season—the kind of fig-tree therein intended—has no stated season—The *occasion* of the parable—Rash conclusions respecting judgments condemned—The *sentiment* is—the *guilt and danger of possessing religious advantages, without exhibiting a corresponding character of purity and activity*—The *fig-tree* was probably intended more immediately to expose the Jewish nation—Isaiah compares *that Church* to a vineyard—and in a vineyard this fig-tree grew—for it was the subject of culture, and not wild—the *vineyard* is the church—the *proprietor* is God—the *expectation of fruit* is a requisition of christian graces—it is a *reasonable expectation*—it is a solemn *scrutiny*—the *disappointment* is great—the *sentence is just*—it proceeds on the clearest *principles*—it is *imperative*—the *plea* is *powerful*—it is *tender*—it is *prevalent*—it is only a *reprieve*, not a pardon—aggravated guilt calls for *severer punishment*—Application—Conclusion.

PAGE 255—281.

LECTURE X.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST—TWO PARABLES.

The sages of antiquity employed parables to elucidate various subjects—sometimes *philosophical principles*—at others, *moral truths*—at others, *maxims of economy*—Jesus excelled in *all*—it is a moral precept, bearing upon the economy of human life, which introduces the principal subject of this Lecture—The *parable* is, upon the anxiety manifested to secure the *chief places* at a feast—the *precept* is, *humility*—the *occasion* was his own invitation to a feast—The eastern divan described, and the places of honour ascertained—The *thing* censured is of small moment—the *spirit* indicated is the object exposed—Nothing is trivial which marks the bias of temper—little circumstances often do this most effectually—Then follows, a lesson of *disinterested benevolence*, addressed to the master of the feast, and admonishing him *whom* he ought to invite—not to *exclude* our friends, but to *include* the needy—These remarks produced a good effect on *one* of the guests—and in *answer* to his exclamation, is introduced the parable of THE MARRIAGE FEAST—The parable recited, with its variation of circumstances, as recorded by two evangelists—one *sentiment* common to both—it is, *the free and full salvation, provided by infinite compassion for the ruined and the lost, is despised or neglected by those to whom it's blessings are offered*—The sovereignty of God is paternal—The *union* of the two parables—the first exceeds the other, in some particulars—the last enumerates the excuses of those who refuse the grace of God—Explanation of the parables by oriental customs—the *supper*—the manner of bidding the guests—a passage in Proverbs—a custom in Egypt—the *wedding-garment*—the *outer darkness*—an especial reference to the *Jews*—of universal application—the *feast* is, the gospel—the *invitation* is full and free—the *excuses* offered are frivolous—sometimes they are open—sometimes evasive—they are always mean, frivolous, false, and insulting—The *power* of the Inviter to destroy is terrible—the *guests* subsequently invited, are the poor and the miserable—the *wedding-garment* applied to the justifying and sanctifying righteous-

ness of Christ—the *punishment* is of an awful character—it is detection, confusion, expulsion, destruction—the *success* of the gospel is seen in the filling of this sanctuary—it's *consummation* is heaven—for there, the purposes of redemption are complete—there every thing is provided for pleasure, and perpetuity—there, the guests are uniform—Conclusion.

PAGE 282—314.

LECTURE XI.

THE PRODIGAL SON; WITH THE WANDERING SHEEP, AND THE LOST PIECE OF MONEY.

The touching character of our Lord's allegories—the Deity always represented in a manner worthy of him—the importance of our Lord's parables—the concessions which must be made in parables, on the part of the subject, for the preservation of the imagery—Abuse of this parable—not intended to typify the Jews and Gentiles—the *occasion* stated—our Lord receives sinners, and the Pharisees murmured—The *sentiment* is conveyed in the passage selected as a text—it is, that *the Deity feels a peculiar satisfaction in the conversion and salvation of the spirit about to perish*—Similar statements in the prophets—Explanation of the terms, *just persons* and *repentance*—exposition of this singular passage—The general sentiment illustrated by the LOST SHEEP—the *diligent means* which the shepherd employs for it's recovery—The sentiment illustrated by the LOST PIECE OF MONEY—the *equal value* of all the subjects of these parables—The sentiment illustrated by the PRODIGAL SON—allusions to oriental customs and scenery—the elder brother returns *from the field*—husbandry no degradation—*feeding swine*, to which the younger was reduced, a great degradation—the *husks* were probably the wild fruit of the carob-tree—*hired servants*—the *robe* and the *ring*—the *fatted calf*—the *mode of salutation* by falling on the neck—the *music and dancing*—The circumstances stated very affecting—a young man forsaking his home—inquiries into the principle of the grant of his father—he departs—he yielded the rein to his passions—he fell into poverty—he found no friends there—a worldly career a state of madness—reflection returns—he resolves to return home—is seen afar off—is welcomed—by all, but his brother—the uncharitableness, and slander, and evil temper, of that brother—the application of the parable—In the character of the Father, we recognise the *compassionate Deity*—in the conduct of the prodigal, *our own*, the *barkslider* is more immediately intended—In the emotions and desires excited, and urging his return, we discern the awakening and reclaiming *influences* of the Holy Spirit—in the reception of the prodigal, the *goodness* of God—Reluctance of church members to forgive, censured—Conclusion.

PAGE 315—343.

LECTURE XII.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

Comparison of the Rich Worldling with this man of pleasure—the character of the former presents a memorable illustration of the

awful description of the Psalmist, relative to the inefficacy of riches—The man of pleasure preferred—The latter furnishes an illustration of the censures of St. James against thoughtless extravagance—The same ruinous principles operated in both, according to their constitutional bias—It makes one man a miser—another a sensualist—Exposition of the censures of James—the avaricious—the oppressor—the lover of this world—this last character appears in the parable of THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS—The narrative a *parable*, not a matter of fact—yet exhibiting great *peculiarities*—Meaning of the term Lazarus—a parable in the *Gemara* resembling this—the *occasion*, of the parable less distinctly marked than most others—it may be traced to a connection with that of the Unjust Steward—our Lord resuming his discourse on the *snares* of wealth—View of this parable by *Masillon* most just and beautiful—The *sentiment* is, that a *useless, luxurious, and dissipated life, is displeasing to God, and destructive to the soul*—The *contrast* between the individuals—in their *life*—prosperity to the one—misery to the other—To *suffer* well is passive obedience—The *characters* of these men were as dissimilar as their stations—they are contrasted in their *death*—In the event itself there was *no contrast*—*both* died—the poor man died first—was scarcely missed—perhaps deprived of the rites of sepulture—the rich man died also—and was *buried*—and this last is all the difference—is *all* the privilege of the great!—They are contrasted in their *future state*—To the poor man, heaven—ministering angels—Abraham's bosom, explained—To the rich man, a place of torment—State of separate spirits—Character and circumstances must agree finally—Important *inferences* presented in this parable—the *general features* of the future state—it commences *immediately* after death—it is a *social* state—it is to some a state of inconceivable *torment*—an impassable gulf—the force of example—remembrance and remorse—the sight of good lost—addition to their numbers an accumulation of their misery—the spirit of his request—it's denial—the sufficiency of the Scriptures—Conclusion.

PAGE 344—370.

LECTURE XIII.

✓ THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN; WITH THE UNJUST JUDGE, AND THE IMPORTUNATE FRIEND.

Every human being entertains a favourable opinion of his own importance—selfishness extends over the character, and influences the principles—On these grounds we may account for the satisfaction with which every man regards his own talents and character—this disposition enters even into our most sacred feelings—The *general* subject of this Lecture is *prayer*—in connection with which Jesus recommends *importunity, patience, and humility*—each of these being illustrated by a separate parable—the first, by the UNJUST JUDGE—it's *sentiment* is, that *we should employ importunity and perseverance in the exercises of devotion*—An extreme case, supposed—an unprincipled magistrate—absolute in the East—the case of the widow—her plea—not vindictive, but importunate—criticism—she succeeds by perseverance—Application of our Lord—Contrast between this ma-

gistrate and the Deity—God is a Father—intended to fortify the minds of his disciples against approaching persecution—The second grace is recommended by the parable of the IMPORTUNATE FRIEND—The *sentiment* is, that *we should not be discouraged by delay*—a friend is solicited—he *sleeps*—he is solicited to *lend*—the time is unseasonable—the door is *shut*—he yields at last to *importunity*—all this, compared and contrasted with the character and conduct of God in answering prayer—The third grace appears in the conduct of the principal person in the parable of THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN—The sentiment is, that *a self-righteous spirit cannot be accepted before God*—They went to *pray*—no external difference—The sect of the Pharisees described—The office of the Publican as a tax-gatherer—The address of the Pharisee—not prayer, but boasting—to how little did it amount at last!—The Publican—his *attitude*—his *prayer*—he is accepted—Application—marks of a self-righteous spirit—it *withdraws* our dependance from the Redeemer—it attempts to *blend* human and divine operations—it is manifest in *comparisons* between ourselves and others—How to guard against this evil principle—Conclusion.

PAGE 371—394.

LECTURE XIV.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Pastoral scenery always attractive—mistakes respecting its power and influence—not free from vice—regarded as a last retreat—its beauties—Simplicity of former times—Nobles and warriors rested amidst rural objects—Beauty of the Psalmist's description of God as a *shepherd*—the *pastures* he provides—the *valley* of the shadow of death—Ezekiel's description of *ministerial* duty—and of the responsibility of the people—THE GOOD SHEPHERD—an irregular and interrupted parable—shifting its imagery as occasion required—The *sheep-fold* described—calling them by name—the shepherd *preceding* them—their *knowledge of the voice* of the shepherd—these all referred to oriental customs—The *sentiment* of this parable is, *the love of Christ to his Church*—Summary of the contents of the parable—solemnity of its introduction—application to men, as his flock—to interested pastors, as hirelings—His *Church* described—his people *hear*, and *know*, and *obey* him—a christian cannot sit under an unsound ministry—He then draws his *own* character,—tenderness and vigilance—perils of the pastoral life in Palestine—evinced in Jacob's appeal to Laban—and in David's exposure of his life to rescue his flock—The death of Christ for his Church—the *unity*, *extent*, and *final bliss* of his fold—Conclusion.

PAGE 395—421.

LECTURE XV.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD ; WITH THE TWO SONS.

The salvation of man an object of infinite importance—the providence of God is perpetually carrying on the design which his compassion projected—He subordinates to it all instrumentality—

Angels and demons are awake to these transactions—man alone sleeps—In this grand work, who was so active as Jesus Christ?—his spirit is seen in his parables—THE TWO SONS—the occasion of the parable—the priests questioned his authority—he evades their demands, and inquires into their views of the character and ministry of John—They refused to answer him, and he rejected their authority—The sentiment is, that *high religious pretensions are frequently unsupported by corresponding obedience*—they were the plausible characters—the sinners, the unpromising, but more profitable class—His application of the parable—Behold God coming forth as a Father—he prescribes activity—he fixes the time—to-day—Some refuse the injunction, and repent—others assent, and disobey—THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD—The scope of this parable is, *the compassion of God in calling men to the knowledge of himself, and of employing them in his service; and his sovereignty in the distribution of his present privileges and final rewards*—The image explained—The sentiment, combined with the former parable, is, *that the most unpromising frequently prove the most illustrious; and that those who have entered his Church, under whatever circumstances, shall have equal acceptance, privileges, and reward*—The object of the parable was to obviate the objections of the Jews against the Gentiles' possessing equal privileges with themselves—degrees in glory—not the subject of the parable—Remarks on the day's wages—the market-place—Application—to the natural condition of men—Where they are found—the situation in which they are found—they attracted his notice—he sought their advantage—he did it repeatedly—he extended his mercy even to the last hour—he expostulated with those whom he invited—Conclusion.

PAGE 422—446.

LECTURE XVI.

THE TALENTS ; WITH THE SERVANT IN THE FIELD.

Our faculties and responsibility—A christian delights to acknowledge his debt to God—no merit attached to our services—The parable of the SERVANT IN THE FIELD—This servant is a *domestic slave*—his duty is to attend his lord in the house—as well as to labour in the fields—Every man has his station assigned by providence—stability of society depends upon a regard to this station—Eastern custom of girding the loins—for journeying or waiting—The sentiment is, *that the best of men can advance no claim of merit upon God, or in respect of salvation, on account of their most righteous and perfect services*—THE TALENTS—two parables—stated—circumstances vary—the sentiment is the same—it is, *that to every man a trust is consigned, for which he is responsible; and that the judgment passed upon him finally, will correspond with the means of improvement at present confided to him!*—The occasion is two-fold—to furnish a reproof, and to rectify a mistake—Circumstances of the parable appear to allude to events then passing—Review of former parables, for the purpose of tracing similar circumstances—Allusions to Pilate—to Herod Antipas—to Archelaus, &c.—The money calculated—the sums differ greatly in the two parables—uncertainty in estimating ancient terms for money—The last parable guards against carelessness—What is peculiar to the first parable—a government—the trust—the

rebellion—the punishment—What is common to both—improvement is expected—abuses exist—a scrutiny is supposed—a sentence is passed—Application—time is a talent committed to our trust—so also are, intellectual capacity—property—and religious privileges—Conclusion.

PAGE 447—476.

LECTURE XVII.

THE HUSBANDMAN; WITH THE TAKING HEAVEN BY STORM, AND THE STONE REJECTED BY THE BUILDERS.

Repetition of this parable by three evangelists—Combination of three momentous truths—FIRST, *The zeal and energy excited by the preaching of the gospel in the world*—The kingdom of God applies to the kingdom of the gospel—the influence of grace in the heart—and a kingdom of future and eternal glory—Examination and application of our Lord's figurative inquiries relative to John the Baptist—The violence which the kingdom of heaven is represented as suffering—literally, it is STORMED—applied to the Gentiles, who accepted the gospel which the Jews rejected—and to the Publicans and harlots, who received the grace which the Pharisees despised—*Force*, signifies restraint over our passions, as well as importunity—The period of the assault—it's commencement in the days of John the Baptist—examples—some such assailants remain—their success. SECONDLY, *The obstinacy and rebellion of the Jews*, amidst their superior advantages; which constitutes the sentiment of the parable of THE HUSBANDMEN—related, with very little variation, by the other evangelists—The vine diligently cultivated in Palestine—the image of prosperity—examples—The wine-press and tower, necessary appendages—Here the vineyard is let out to husbandmen—the rent, in those times, was paid out of the produce—Some circumstances, improbable in themselves, supposed; because necessary to the facts to be elucidated and enforced—other circumstances are merely ornamental—exemplified and proved, in both cases—reference to former similar imagery—Testimony of the prophet to the guilt and rebellion of the Jewish nation—accordance of this testimony with the parable—it foretels the extinction of their national existence—and the removal of their religious privileges—they felt the application. THIRDLY, *The guilt and danger, in every age, of rejecting the Saviour, and resisting a cause which cannot fail to triumph*—This application of the subject is made by our Lord himself, under a new image—The image is familiar—it is a Rock—it denotes whatever is essential in him as a Saviour—strength—stability—durability—A corner-stone—union combined with strength—Opposition supposed—some stumbled at his humiliation—were offended at his life—scandalized at his death—disgusted with his doctrines—Two modes of falling—by ignorance—by malice—The ruin of his enemies—Allusion to the Jewish modes of stoning—Application—Conclusion.

PAGE 477—507.

LECTURE XVIII.

THE TEN VIRGINS; WITH THE WATCHFUL AND NEGLIGENT SERVANT, AND
THE HOUSE BUILT ON THE ROCK AND ON THE SAND.

Reflections suggested by the close of the Lectures—the end of religious instruction is moral improvement—the duty of vigilance produced in the last of our Lord's parables—he presses it by the certainty of his return, and the uncertainty of it's period—The great subject of these closing admonitions is, *the day of judgment*—compared to a thief in the night—in what sense—and to the days of Noah—Our duties illustrated by those of a WATCHFUL, our dangers by those of a NEGLIGENT SERVANT—He is described as having a *delegated authority*—but he is *amenable* to his Lord—the power of his master was absolute—such was the wretched state of society—described as it existed—not vindicated—Uses made of this image by St. Peter—and by St. Paul—THE TEN VIRGINS—The *sentiment* of this parable is, *The necessity and duty of christian watchfulness*—the circumstances not to be too closely interpreted—The prominent feature in the parable, *a marriage procession*—described as celebrated in the East—exposition of a declaration of John the Baptist—the procession took place in the evening—sometimes late at night—Criticism on a passage in Solomon's Song—reference to the solemnity and splendour of the return of Jesus—Application—Professors of religion are intended by the *virgins*—their pretensions, by *lamps*—the alarm is *death and judgment*—The signal is *sudden, awful, and irresistible*—The horrors of an *unprepared* state—and fearful *exclusion*—The door of *hope* is shut—the door of *ordinances* is shut—the door of *mercy* is shut—the door of *heaven* is shut—the *prison-door* is shut also—Blessed are the guests at that festivity—John was commanded to *write* this—as a *difficult*, yet perpetual, important, positive, consoling, admonitory truth—The necessity of practising, as well as knowing these sentiments—The parables recapitulated and applied—Our Lord's own *improvement*—The House built on the Rock—and the house erected on the Sand—The *sentiment* of awful import—*Those who infer their safety from the attention with which they listen to the word of life, and approve it's system, while their character and conduct are uninfluenced by it's Spirit, will perish under it's penalties*—Conclusion.

PAGE 508—532.

ADDITIONAL NOTES—comprising remarks on the Prodigal Son—and on the Good Shepherd—with illustrations from Dr. Clarke's Travels—of our Lord's visit to Samaria.

NOTES, 533—535.

to others, in terms borrowed from the superior advantages of it's position.

It is certain that figurative expressions will vary in different countries, because both the face of nature and the customs of society are dissimilar; and upon these, imagery in language is founded. We must pay particular attention to this circumstance in prosecuting these Lectures, in order to give to each parable that weight, which, as an allegory, it can have, only by the correctness of it's allusion to the features and customs of the country in which it was spoken. Many of the figures employed in the Scriptures lose much of their beauty, when these things are either unknown or overlooked. The infrequency of showers during the summer, and their nearness to a desert country, gave peculiar force to their descriptions of adversity, as a "thirsty land;" and of prosperity, as a spring rising unexpectedly in the wilderness. As a hilly country, what a beautiful image of security does the Psalmist present to the mind, when he says, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth, even for ever." As the melting of the snows often produced a fearful torrent from the mountains,—to be overwhelmed with trouble is often represented as being plunged into deep waters. As a climate subject to tempests of the most

terrible order, these are described, in all their grandeur, as the harbingers of the Divine presence, and the instruments of his wrath. As they were principally occupied in agriculture and pasturage, the references to pastoral life are abundant. It would be easy to cite examples of appeal to the local features of the country—it's hills, it's valleys, it's fountains, it's rivers—many of which are called by their names, and most of which are included in figurative descriptions of the state of the mind, or of the circumstances. These may be called images peculiar to the country; but at the same time they are so blended with [the general order of nature, that they must be always admired. They speak a language of peculiar emphasis to Eastern nations; “but their sound “is gone out through all lands, and their words “to the end of the world.”

3. *The descriptive language of the Scriptures is peculiarly sublime.*—This might be inferred from the allusions which have been cursorily made to it's usual style; but it affords so many sublime specimens of every kind of writing of the first order, that it would be negligent and unpardonable not to select and produce at least one example of the different figures of speech in which it abounds, and which will be named in their order. These will be found to contain every thing important, as well as graceful—every thing

calculated to touch the heart, as well as to inspire the imagination. I select a description, than which nothing can be more sublime, from one of the minor Prophets; as less likely to attract notice than the general and continued grandeur of Isaiah's delineations. At the same time, it furnishes an exemplification of those local features, in the description, to which reference has already been made, as abounding in the Scriptures.

“ God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the
“ Lord revengeth and is furious: the Lord will
“ take vengeance on his adversaries, and he re-
“ serveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is
“ slow to anger, and great in power, and will
“ not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath
“ his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and
“ the clouds are the dust of his feet. He re-
“ buketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth
“ up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and
“ Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.
“ The mountains quake at him, and the hills
“ melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence,
“ yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.
“ Who can stand before his indignation? and
“ who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?
“ His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks
“ are thrown down by him. The Lord is good,
“ a strong hold in the day of trouble; and
“ he knoweth them that trust in him.” —

The repetitions to be observed in the opening of this sublime passage — “ the Lord revengeth — the
“ Lord revengeth and is furious — the Lord will
“ take vengeance on his adversaries ” — arise from the peculiar construction of Hebrew poetry.
“ It consists in dividing every period into corresponding, for the most part into equal, numbers,
“ which answer to one another both in sense and
“ sound.” Its origin “ is clearly to be deduced
“ from the manner in which their sacred hymns
“ were wont to be sung. They were accompanied
“ with music ; and they were performed by choirs,
“ or bands of singers and musicians, who answered
“ alternately to each other.” “ This method of
“ composition . . . easily spread itself through their
“ other poetical writings which were not designed
“ to be sung in alternate portions, . . . and became
“ one of the great characteristics of ancient
“ Hebrew poetry*.” — Figurative language, in describing the Deity, must be taken with just limitations. “ *God is jealous* ” — not that he is affected by human passions, but that his perfections require him to guard the rectitude of his character ; and his benevolence justifies the expectation of the affections of his creatures in return. “ *The Lord revengeth* ” — to him alone belongs the right of taking vengeance ; for he

* Dr. Blair.

alone cannot err; and he will award righteous retribution in the day when he shall visit for transgression. When man is angry, his vindictive strokes are frequently indiscriminately distributed: in Divine wrath is no passion; its objects are clearly discriminated—“*his adversaries*:.” His punishments are proportioned to the offence; and even these are not precipitated—they are held in “*reserve*.” Therefore there is a consistency in the process of the description, when it is subjoined to this terrible display of Divine judgment—“*the Lord is slow to anger*:.” But who can duly appreciate the sublimity of a description which surrounds him with such instruments to perform his high behest!—the “*whirlwind and storm*” encompassing him;—the “*clouds*” scattered as “*the dust of his feet*;”—the “*sea*” shrinking, and the “*rivers*” failing at his “*rebuke*;”—“*Bashan*,” “*Carmel*,” “*Lebanon*,” the principal mountains of Israel, the images of fertility, majesty, defence—all “*languishing*;”—the “*earth*” melting away before him;—and his “*fury*” rushing to consume, like a devouring “*fire*.” Then this storm instantly subsides into a calm, when he turns to other objects—every frown is effaced from his countenance—every attribute of terror is laid aside—and all his power and majesty are combined, for the security of those “*that trust in him*.”

4. *The allegorical language of the Scriptures is singularly beautiful, and the images correctly preserved.*—As these press so closely upon parables, they deserve particular attention; and the Psalmist has furnished the finest specimen of this figure to be produced in all antiquity. “Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of Hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself! It is burnt with fire; it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance*.” — The origin of the Hebrew nation, as a vine planted

* Dr. Blair, in his Lectures on Rhetoric, has referred to this beautiful allegory; and produced, as illustrations of different figures of speech, many striking instances from the inspired writers, especially from the Book of Job.

for God—the preparation of the soil for it's reception—the country from which it was transplanted—the majesty with which it flourished—contrasted with the melancholy devastation to which it was exposed, and the state to which it was reduced—closing with that fine apostrophe, “Return, we beseech thee, O God of Hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine!”—are all inimitably delineated, and are no less true in circumstance than correct in imagery.

5. *The poetical language of the Scriptures abounds in imagery.*—The most perfect and beautiful example of this species of composition is the Song of Solomon, which, in it's figures, is almost wholly pastoral. To perceive it's beauties, we ought to refer to the marriage ceremonies of the Hebrews; but without such a critical examination, it's excellence as a poem, in point of richness and variety of figurative language, can scarcely be overlooked by the most superficial reader. Those who have examined the specimens of Eastern poetry furnished by Sir William Jones and other Orientalists, cannot fail to observe the correspondence, in point of style, between this matchless composition, and some of the most admired productions of a similar character. The Book of Job, again, abounds with instances of the sublime imagery of Hebrew poetry; at the same time, it is remarkable that it bears no

allusion to any of the customs of the Jews, the scenery of Judea, or the events of sacred history*. The scene is laid in Idumea, a part of Arabia; and the poem is considered as the most ancient in the world; while the author is altogether unknown. I will only further refer to the lamentation of David over Jonathan, as the most affecting specimen of elegiac composition. It is tender and beautiful beyond description: and one of its most touching images is sunk in our translation. It may be literally rendered, "O antelope of Israel, pierced upon thine own mountains†!" either alluding to the well-known fact, that most animals retire when wounded, to die in their own retreats; or to the affecting circumstance of his falling upon the scenes of his youth, and pleasure, and possessions—the bitterness of death being increased by so many objects of delight surrounding him‡.

6. *Personification is another part of figurative language, in which the Scriptures excel.*—As it is the boldest, and the most difficult to maintain, of all the figures of speech; so is it carried to

* Dr. Blair.

† See Dr. Geddes' translation of this passage, and his Notes. See also Lectures on Scripture Facts, Lect. X. Note 2. p. 431.

‡ The antelope is the most beautiful of all the quadrupeds of that part of the globe: and the selection of this animal as a representation of the dying Prince, accords with those sentiments of tenderness which the Poet and the Friend cherished for him.

the greatest extent in the inspired volume. The most perfect example of this style is to be found in the description, given by the prophet Isaiah, of the death of the king of Babylon.—“Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest and at quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak, as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven,

“ I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ;
“ I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north : I will ascend
“ above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like
“ the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought
“ down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that
“ see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and
“ consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made
“ the earth to tremble ; that did shake kingdoms ;
“ that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof ; that opened not the
“ house of his prisoners ? All the kings of the
“ nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every
“ one in his own house : But thou art cast out
“ of thy grave like an abominable branch, and
“ as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust
“ through with the sword, that go down to the
“ stones of a pit ; as a carcase trodden under feet.
“ Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial,
“ because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain
“ thy people : the seed of evil-doers shall never
“ be renowned.”——The cruelty of his oppression
precedes his fall, to make us feel it's justice. The
peace which follows his tumultuous reign, causes
us to witness the defeat of his ambition with
singular gratification : it is the stillness of nature
after a hurricane. The agitation of the invisible
world at his approach—the solemn yet shadowy
state of departed monarchs, still retaining the

semblance of majesty amidst utter weakness, and exhibiting a gratification in the humiliation of him to whom they were once tributary, raises sensations of unspeakable awe. The contrast between what he was, and what he is—the loss of empire, wealth, flattery, pleasure—the nakedness of the dispossessed and disembodied spirit—are very striking. This contrast is heightened by the repetition of his vain-boastings and visionary ambition. The threatening that even death shall not terminate his degradation—that his body shall be denied the rites of sepulture—that his children shall never inherit the empire—that with him the dynasty shall cease—terminates the majesty and terror of the prediction.

I could not enter upon parables, without first adverting to the principle whence they emanate; and in so doing, I have been anxious to produce the excellence of the figurative language of Scripture, in it's native dignity and simplicity, rather than to weaken, by attempting to embellish it, by any commentary of mine. I close this first branch of preliminary dissertation with the touching apostrophe of our Lord to Jerusalem, which contains, with the most impassioned feeling, and the most generous sentiments, an image as simple as it is tender. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that

“are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” Other examples might be produced—as of apostrophe in the Prophets, and of personification in the sublime description given by Habakkuk of the descent of the Deity*. Similar descriptions may be observed in the Psalms, on various occasions; and striking delineations of the same nature in the Book of Job: but these shall suffice; and the excellence of these will, I trust, justify me for having multiplied quotations to the extent which I have already done.

And now it only remains, from the character of grandeur and simplicity uniformly attached to the Sacred Writings, whatever pen was employed, to infer the absurdity of those claims which the deluded or the artful have advanced, of late years, to inspiration. Although it is true that the prophet wrote in a style corresponding with the character of his own mind, yet whatever the Spirit of God touched, was transformed, refined, elevated: and although some of the writers of the Old and New Testament were taken from the very lowest class of society—from the herd in the stall—from the fisher's net—from the most unlettered condition—there is nothing mean in

* See the Notes at the end of this Lecture.

their productions. Sublimity of thought, and simple majesty of expression, characterize the entire volume, amidst all the variety of it's penmen. Grammatical inaccuracies have been traced by some critics;—not to say, that some of these must have arisen, in multiplying copies, from the inadvertence of transcribers: other violations of the forms of construction we know to have been made purposely; because the sublimity of thought, finding no method of embodying itself in common language, sought it in unusual combinations. Such an instance is the apparent redundancy of the Apostle's description of heaven, as a “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” But the character of the volume (apart from such occasional deviations as may be accounted for in frequent transcription) is, uniform sublimity, both of conception and expression. So convinced was the false prophet of the necessity for every thing assuming to be inspiration to appear in the purest and sublimest form, that he took particular pains, in framing the Korān, to obviate this difficulty; and even appeals to it's elegance of style, as a presumptive evidence in it's favour. Let that laboured volume be compared with the Scriptures, both suffering the disadvantage of translation; and let it be seen whether the dreams of Mahomet will endure to be brought into contact with the Oracles of God.

But in regard to the wretched pretensions of modern prophecy, they would not deserve to be named here, but because the poor are sometimes the subjects of such delusion : if no other evidence could be brought to bear against them, this alone is sufficient to expose them—the contemptible language in which they are conveyed ; for when God speaks to man, by whomsoever, or in whatever age he speaks, he speaks like himself;—in what majesty of thought, in what grandeur of expression, you shall judge from the specimens this evening produced. And who that considers the sublimity of Revelation, soaring above all human genius—extending itself over all nations, and from age to age—rising superior to time and accident—and standing surrounded by the wrecks of empires and of science—but must say, “I have seen an end of all perfection—but thy “commandment is exceeding broad.”

NOTES.

IN addition to the specimens of the sublime character of the figurative language of the Scriptures, the following extract, from Dr. Watts' Preface to his *Lyric Poetry* on the same subject, may not be unacceptable. After combating the prejudices against the higher order of poetry as applied to religious purposes, he says to the objectors: "Let me intreat them to look into their Bibles, and remember the style and way of writing that is used by the ancient Prophets. Have they forgot, or were they never told, that many parts of the Old Testament are Hebrew verse? And the figures are stronger, and the metaphors bolder, and the images more surprising and strange, than ever I read in any profane writer. When Deborah sings her praises to the God of Israel, while He marched from the field of Edom, she sets the earth a trembling, the heavens drop, and the mountains dissolve from before the Lord. 'They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera: When the river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.' *Judges V. &c.* When Eliphaz, in the book of Job, speaks his sense of the holiness of God, he introduces a machine in a vision: 'Fear came upon me, trembling on all my bones, the hair of my flesh stood up; a spirit passed by and stood still, but its form was undiscernible; an image before mine eyes; and silence: then I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? &c.' *Job IV.* When he describes the safety of the righteous, he hides him from the scourge of the tongue, he makes him laugh at destruction and famine, he brings the stores of the field into league with him, and makes the brute animals enter into a covenant of peace.' *Job V. 21, &c.* When Job

“speaks of the grave, how melancholy is the gloom that he spreads
 “over it! ‘It is a region to which I must shortly go, and whence
 “I shall not return; it is a land of darkness, it is darkness itself,
 “the land of the shadow of death; all confusion and disorder, and
 “where the light is as darkness.’ ‘This is my house, there have I made
 “my bed: I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the
 “worm, Thou art my mother and my sister: As for my hope, who
 “shall see it? I and my hope go down together to the bars of the
 “pit.’ *Job* x. 21; and xvii. 13. When he humbles himself in com-
 “plainings before the almightiness of God, what contemptible and
 “feeble images doth he use! ‘Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and
 “fro? wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? I consume away like a
 “rotten thing; a garment eaten by the moth.’ *Job* xiii. 25, &c. ‘Thou
 “lifest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and
 “dissolvest my substance.’ *Job* xxx. 22. Can any man invent more
 “despicable ideas to represent the scoundrel herd and refuse of man-
 “kind, than those which *Job* uses? *chap.* xxx. and thereby he ag-
 “gravates his own sorrows and reproaches to amazement: ‘They
 “that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would
 “have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock: For want and
 “famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness desolate and
 “waste: They cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper-roots for
 “their meat: They were driven forth from among men, (they cried
 “after them as after a thief,) to dwell in the clefts of the valleys,
 “in the caves of the earth, and in rocks: Among the bushes they
 “brayed, under the nettles they were gathered together; they were
 “children of fools; yea, children of base men; they were viler than
 “the earth: And now am I their song; yea, I am their by-word, &c.—
 “How mournful and dejected is the language of his own sorrows:
 “‘Terrors are turned upon him; they pursue his soul as the wind, and
 “his welfare passes away as a cloud; his bones are pierced within him,
 “and his soul is poured out; he goes mourning without the sun, a
 “brother to dragons, and a companion to owls; while his harp and
 “organ are turned into the voice of them that weep.’—I must tran-
 “scribe one half of this holy book, if I would shew the grandeur, the
 “variety, and the justness of his ideas, or the pomp and beauty of his
 “expression: I must copy out a good part of the writings of David

"and Isaiah, if I would represent the poetical excellencies of their thoughts and style: nor is the language of the Lesser Prophets, especially in some paragraphs, much inferior to these.

"Now, while they paint human nature in it's various forms and circumstances, if their designing be so just and noble, their dispositions so artful, and their colouring so bright, beyond the most famed human writers, how much more must their descriptions of God and heaven exceed all that is possible to be said by a meaner tongue! When they speak of the dwelling-place of God; 'He inhabits eternity, and sits upon the throne of his holiness, in the midst of light inaccessible.' When his holiness is mentioned; 'the heavens are not clean in his sight, he charges his angels with folly: He looks to the moon, and it shineth not, and the stars are not pure before his eyes: He is a jealous God and consuming fire.' If we speak of his strength, behold he is strong: 'He removes the mountains, and they know it not: He overthrows them in his anger: He shakes the earth from her place, and her pillars tremble: He makes a path through the mighty waters; He discovers the foundations of the world: the pillars of heaven are astonished at his reproof.' And after all, these are but a portion of his ways: The thunder of his power who can understand? His sovereignty, his knowledge, and his wisdom, are revealed to us in language vastly superior to all the poetical accounts of Heathen divinity. 'Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth; but shall the clay say to Him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?' He bids the heavens drop down from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness. He commands the sun, and it riseth not, and he sealeth up the stars. It is He that saith to the deep, Be dry; and he drieth up the rivers. Woe to them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord; his eyes are upon all their ways, he understands their thoughts afar off. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. He calls out all the stars by their names: He frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and makes the diviners mad: He turns wise men backwards, and their knowledge becomes foolish. His transcendent eminence above all things is most nobly represented; 'when he sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers: All nations before him are as

" the drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance: He
 " takes up the isles as a very little thing: Lebanon with all her
 " beasts is not a sufficient sacrifice to this God; nor are all the trees
 " sufficient for the burning.' This God, before whom the whole
 " creation is as nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity. 'To which
 " of all the Heathen gods, then, will ye compare me? saith the Lord;
 " and what shall I be likened to?' And to which of all the Heathen
 " poets shall we liken or compare this glorious orator, the sacred
 " describer of the Godhead? The orators of all nations are as nothing
 " before him, and their words are vanity and emptiness. Let us
 " turn our eyes now to some of the holy writings, where God is
 " creating the world. How meanly do the best of the Gentiles talk
 " and trifle upon this subject, when brought into comparison with
 " Moses, whom Longinus, himself a Gentile critic, cites as 'a master
 " of the sublime style, when he chooses to use it.' And the Lord said,
 " Let there be light; and there was light: Let there be clouds and
 " seas, sun and stars, plants, and animals; and behold they are: He
 " commanded, and they appear and obey: by the word of the Lord
 " were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of
 " his mouth.' This is working, like a God, with infinite ease and
 " omnipotence. His wonders of providence, for the terror and ruin
 " of his adversaries, and for the succour of his saints, is set before
 " our eyes in the Scripture with equal magnificence, and as becomes
 " Divinity. 'When he arises out of his place, the earth trembles;
 " the foundations of the hills are shaken because he is wroth: There
 " goes a smoke up out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devour-
 " eth; coals are kindled by it. He bows the heavens, and comes
 " down; and darkness is under his feet. The mountains melt like
 " wax, and flow down at his presence.' If Virgil, Homer, or Pindar,
 " were to prepare an equipage for a descending God, they might use
 " thunder and lightnings too, and clouds and fire, to form a chariot
 " and horses for the battle or the triumph; but there is none of them
 " provides him a flight of cherubs instead of horses, or seats him in
 " chariots of salvation. David beholds him riding upon the heaven of
 " heavens, by his name JAH: 'He was mounted upon a cherub, and
 " did fly, he flew on wings of the wind:' and Habakkuk sends the
 " pestilence before him. Homer keeps a mighty stir with his

“Νεφέλη γὰρ ἐστὶ Ζεύς, and Hesiod with his Ζεύς ὑψηλοτάτης, Jupiter, that raises up the clouds, and that makes a noise, or thunders on high. But a divine poet makes the clouds but the dust of his feet; and when the Highest gives his voice into the heavens, hailstones and coals of fire follow. A divine poet discovers the channels of the waters, and lays open the foundations of nature; at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. When the Holy One alighted upon Mount Sinai, his glory covered the heavens: He stood and measured the earth: He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered: the perpetual hills did bow: His ways are everlasting.” Then the prophet saw the tents of Cushan in affliction, and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. *Hab. iii.* Nor did the blessed Spirit, which animated these writers, forbid them the use of visions, dreams, the opening of scenes dreadful and delightful, and the introduction of machines upon great occasions: the Divine licence in this respect is admirable and surprising, and the images are often too bold and dangerous for an uninspired writer to imitate. Mr. Dennis has made a noble essay to discover how much superior is inspired poesy to the brightest and best descriptions of a mortal pen. Perhaps, if his proposal of criticism had been encouraged and pursued, the nation might have learnt more value for the word of God, and the wits of the age might have been secured from the danger of Deism; while they must have been forced to confess at least the divinity of all the poetical books of Scripture, when they see a genius running through them more than human.”

WATTS' *Preface to Lyric Poems.*

The following sublime passage from Habakkuk was referred to in the preceding Lecture, but not quoted at length. “O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known*; in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand†: and there was the hiding of his

* *As the year's approach, thou makest it known.*

† *Rays streamed from his hands.* See Deut. xxxiii. 2. Hebr. *beams—diverging like horns.*

"power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went
 "forth at his feet*. He stood and measured the earth: he beheld,
 "and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were
 "scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.
 "I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the
 "land of Midian did tremble. Was the Lord displeased against the
 "rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against
 "the sea, that thou didst† ride upon thine horses, and thy chariots
 "of salvation? Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the
 "oaths of the tribes, even thy word‡. Thou didst cleave the earth
 "with rivers. The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the
 "overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice,
 "and lift up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in
 "their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the
 "shining of thy glittering spear. Thou didst march through the
 "land in indignation, thou didst thresh the Heathen in anger. Thou
 "wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with
 "thine anointed§; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the
 "wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck||. Thou didst
 "strike through with his staves¶ the head of his villages: they came
 "out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was to devour the
 "poor secretly. Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses,
 "through the heap of great waters. When I heard, my belly trem-
 "bled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my
 "bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of
 "trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them
 "with his troops**. Although the fig-treeshall not blossom††, neither

* *Flashes of fire went forth.*

† *When thou didst ride, &c.*

‡ *According to the oath unto the tribes, even the promise.*

§ *Even for the deliverance of thine anointed ones.*

|| *Thou didst lay bare the foundation to the rock; referring to the death of their first-born, as the utter overthrow of the Egyptian houses, by a strong and beautiful figure: wounding the head—uprooting the habitation from its basis.*

¶ *With thy rod, &c.*

** *Because I shall be brought to the day of trouble, to go captive to the people who shall invade us with their troops.*

†† *Shall not bud, or flourish—because the fig-tree never blossoms*

"shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places."

externally; it's blossom is in the centre of the fruit, which first appears as a bud. In the alterations, I have followed Bishop Newcome's Translation of the Minor Prophets, and only when it appeared to throw more light upon this beautiful passage than the common rendering. The description of the prophet relates, alternately, to the miracles of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the giving of the Law at Sinai, and his anticipation of sharing the calamities of his people in an approaching captivity, for which he prepares himself by confidence in Jehoyah,—with which sublime strain of faith and devotion the piece closes.

LECTURE II.

ON SCRIPTURE TYPES.

GALATIANS IV. 24.

Which things are an Allegory.

IT was a beautiful sentiment of antiquity, that the world is a Parable; the external form of which is visible, and apprehended by all men; but it's hidden wisdom, enveloped as the soul in the body, demanding to be drawn forth by diligent investigation*. Granting the principle, the moral must be, The nature and beneficence of the great Creator. The arrangement of it's several parts exhibits his infinite wisdom; the stupendous character of the whole, his eternal power and Godhead; the amplitude of it's provisions, his inexhaustible liberality; it's ineffable grace and beauty, the attribute of inconceivable sublimity, and the exercise of matchless skill. And when it is remembered that the

* "Εἴστι γὰρ καὶ τὸν κόσμον ΜΥΘΟΝ εἶπεν. σαρμάτων μὲν καὶ
χρημάτων ἐν αὐτῷ φαινόμενον, ψυχῶν δὲ καὶ χώων κρυπτομένων.
Sallust. Περὶ Θεῶν, cap. 3.

same hand framed the sun and the glowworm; that the same Power causes the earth to hang self-balanced on her centre, and stretches the light film, the gossamer wing of the butterfly; and that the same character of inscrutability attaches to each of these, the greatest and the most minute of his operations; we are impressed with the liveliest sense of his immensity. But a Parable implies concealed knowledge; and by serious and attentive scrutiny alone can we develop the sublime teachings of the book of Nature. It is a volume lying open before mankind, filled with information of the highest order. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." But to how many a regardless eye do the orbs of heaven shine in vain! by how many a sullen and closed ear their eloquence is unheard! How many an insensible being, wearing the form of man, and endued with his faculties—these faculties being absorbed by some earthly interest, or engaged in some frivolous pursuit,—sets his foot upon the autumnal leaf, stripped of it's covering by the latest blasts of the season, and presenting the naked and innumerable veins through which the vital lymph, now retreating to the root of the tree, once flowed,—and never asks after the Almighty

Workman who distributed those slender and delicate channels to conduct the rivulet of life over the whole surface! Even now

—————"The icy touch
Of unprolific Winter has impress'd
A cold stagnation on th' intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months,
And all shall be restor'd. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And, more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
Then each, in it's peculiar honours clad,
Shall publish, even to the distant eye,
It's family and tribe." ————

Can it be, that this awful and magnificent scenery, this change from life and beauty to death and desolation, the dreary wastes of Winter yielding again in their turn to the reviving touch of the Spring, should fail to impress the heart? To how many is this Parable replete with instruction—this type of all that is momentous to man, presented without effect! The Spring, the Summer, the Autumn, the Winter, return, and repeat their successive lectures on the duties, the changes, the brevity of human life; and scarcely among the myriads thronging the surface of the earth, which they alternately decorate and ravage, find an auditor. It is indeed true, that the eye of the Naturalist may be delighted

to witness these transformations: the Philosopher may scrutinize them, to illustrate some favourite system, and establish his doctrine of causes and effects: the Poet may gather the flowers of the gentle season before they fade, and transplant them into the regions of imagination, where he flatters himself they shall never wither; or borrow the dreadful majesty of Winter, with

———“ Clouds and storms around him thrown,
Tempest o'er tempest liurl'd,” ———

to deepen some of his more awful conceptions: the Moralist may trace these vicissitudes, to round a period, to point a sentence, to give weight to some neglected truth, to awaken some sentimental emotions—vivid, brilliant, evanescent as the coruscations of the northern polar lights. But where shall we find the man who sits down to study this parable; to form his character upon its import; to feel the transitory nature of his present being; and to learn how to improve, to enjoy, and to devote the seasons of human life? This is the man, who, beholding the type, makes himself master of its occult, significant wisdom.

A Parable required an interpreter:—thus our Lord was frequently solicited by his Disciples to explain, in private, the truths which he had delivered publicly in this form. So the book of Nature was read in vain, until Revelation became its great

interpreter. The display of the being and perfections of God was too general to instruct in the specific obligations of Religion; and the wildest imaginations prevailed, while the worst passions remained unsubdued, and even unrestrained. It was the *Bible* which, while it disclosed so much as was necessary to our information of the origin and nature of the material world, availed itself of sensible objects to lead us to eternal interests, and caused us to hear the testimony of Nature to the existence and attributes of the Divinity. Types, separated from their immediate intention, gave rise to the most absurd fables, and the most senseless idolatry. It is necessary, therefore, to connect this visible and beautiful creation with its great Author, to understand its testimony, and perceive its destination. The man who, discarding the imaginary power, *Nature*, sees in the constitution and course of created being, the eternal God, is the man who reads the lore of material objects aright, and derives advantage from every season, in every situation: he

"Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks;
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

There are many things in this parable of Nature and Time which God himself alone can interpret. Many of the secret operations of Nature are yet undiscovered. The Philosopher wears himself in vain: he has launched upon an ocean, unfathom-

able and shoreless; and his little bark, exposed to every wind that blows, must be without a pilot or a compass, unless he will take Revelation for his chart, and resign the helm to the Deity. The future world is the land of discovery: and there, what even a Newton feebly conceived shall be rendered plain to every capacity; and all that escaped the penetration of genius and of patient research, shall be unfolded. As to the events connected with this present state, these are so varied, and so obscure, that Reason, fainting in the pursuit of them, resigns the research to the passions; by which we are precipitated into rash and false conclusions, derogatory from the honour of God, destructive of our own peace, scarcely counterbalanced by the discoveries of Christianity,—and never wholly to be rectified, until the drama of Time shall close, and God himself shall explain his own purposes, and unravel the mysteries of his providence.

If the material universe is a Type, and the whole of the present state of being a Parable, we cannot be astonished that parts of the one should be selected as lively representations of the other. What Figurative Language is to the ear, Types are to the eye. And they have a twofold character; such as, from known and admitted facts, become the elucidation of spiritual or future subjects; and such as, existing in material objects, present some analogy or resemblance to invisible and eternal things.

They may, therefore, be addressed to the eye or the ear, according to the nature of the type.—The Lecture of this evening is to be,

ON SCRIPTURE TYPES.

but before we proceed to an examination of these, it will be proper to look into the origin and uses of Types in general, which will guide us in the interpretation and discussion of those appropriated in the Scriptures to divine subjects. While the teaching of God has an infinite superiority over all other instruction, and maintains a character altogether it's own, in it's manner it bears sometimes a manifest analogy to the ordinary means of information; which serves to cast a light upon it's own mode, and to give common things that interest which they would not otherwise possess.

I.—ON TYPES IN GENERAL.

In tracing the numberless symbols adopted by antiquity to their *origin*, we shall find, for the most part, that their birth-place was Egypt. The names of Cham and Mizraim, applied to this country, demonstrate the early settlement of the descendants of a branch of Noah's family on this singular spot. The natural peculiarities of the country gave rise to a variety of types, necessary to its cultivation, and the preservation of the first settlers: and these were afterwards transferred to nations

who, while they adopted the symbol, knew nothing of its original import. Most of the idols worshipped by Greece and Rome were no more than Egyptian types, understood in that country to refer to agriculture, and necessary intimations of times and events connected with the cultivation of the earth. As these nations afterwards subdued the world, and spread their idolatry with their arms, the greatest proportion of those religious symbols with which we are acquainted must have been derived from Egypt. There are some, however, of a character more general, which could not have their origin there. The symbol of Fire is the most ancient of all types, and was intended to convey a lively idea of the power, beauty, purity, and eternity of God. This magnificent representation prevailed throughout the East, and passed thence to the Western nations; some worshipping it as collected in the glorious orb of the sun; others kindling and perpetuating it on their altars. And while Persia kept this symbol almost unmingled with any other, Greece and Rome blended it with their complicated idolatry, and appointed virgins to preserve it from extinction. It is remarkable, that the same type was found in Peru, and some other parts of America, when Europeans, guided by avarice, carried oppression and war into the unknown regions of the New World. Nor must it be forgotten, that holy and perpetual

fire was appointed among the ceremonials which Moses prescribed to the Jewish people. The Signs of the Zodiac, also, must have been much older than any Egyptian symbols: and, as they did not agree with the agricultural interests of that country, which depended more upon local phænomena than upon general seasons, when we find these Signs inscribed upon their Pyramids—those stupendous structures, which, rising in an antiquity too remote for us to trace, have remained until this day,—we must consider the Egyptians as the preservers and not as the inventors of the Zodiac, and perhaps look for their origin in Chaldea. These were evidently intended for the guidance of nations in their agricultural pursuits, and for their instruction in the seasons and their respective labours. We can still trace the propriety and expression of some of those prominent symbols. “The *Bears*, inhabitants of the Arctic regions, have possession of the northern pole. The *Ram*, *Bull*, and *Lion*, all sacred to the solar light and fire, are accommodated to the degrees of the sun’s power, as it increases in the Summer months. The *Crab*, which walks sideways and backwards, is placed where the sun moves parallel to the Equator, and begins in that sign to recede towards the south. The *Scales* are placed at the Autumnal *Equinox*, where the light and darkness are equally balanced. *Capricorn*, or the wild

“mountain-goat, is placed at the Tropical point
 “from whence the sun begins to climb upward
 “toward the north. The *ear of corn* in the hand
 “of *Virgo* marks the season of harvest. The
 “precession of the Equinoctial points has now re-
 “moved the Figures, and the stars they belong to,
 “out of their proper places; but such was their
 “meaning when they were in them*.” The an-
 tiquity of thus portioning out the heavens, ac-
 cording to Divine appointment, “for signs, and
 for seasons, and for days, and years,” may be
 learned from the eloquent appeal of Job, the oldest
 writing extant: “Canst thou bind the sweet in-
 “fluences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of
 “Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazaroth in his
 “season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his
 “sons?†” *Arcturus* rises in September, and be-
 gins the Autumn. *Orion* rises in December, and
 commences the Winter. The *Pleiades* rise in the
 Spring. *Mazaroth* is generally understood to in-
 tend the entire Zodiac, the Signs of which lead
 forward the months in their respective order, through
 the circle of the year. While the same writer, in
 a corresponding passage‡, connects with these
 names “the Chambers of the South,” probably
 meaning those southern stars which are for the

* Jones on the Figurative Language of the Holy Scriptures,

P. 259.

† Job xxxviii. 31, 32.

‡ Job ix. 9.

most part concealed from us, but which rise in the Summer; such as the Dog-star, and others. These, then, were general signs, common to all nations, and not originating in Egyptian symbols. “But to the peculiar need in which the Egyptians stood of astronomy, we are indebted for most of the ancient symbols, and for the progress and regular form which painting and writing afterwards assumed.”

These symbols arose from necessity—a necessity imposed upon the Egyptians by the peculiarity of their climate, and the sudden and important inundations of the Nile. Those who, emigrating from other countries, tried on that singular soil the ordinary modes of agriculture, had many unexpected calamities to contend with, and much local information to acquire. The crops of the Spring would be blasted, about May, by the pestilential winds of Ethiopia. Those who tried to repair its ravages, and beheld the promise of a second crop, would find their hopes destroyed by the sudden overflow of the Nile; which sometimes rising as high as sixteen cubits, not only swept away their harvest, but overwhelmed their cattle, and compelled them to seek safety by flight. Many of the ancient settlers, discouraged by these disappointments, fixed their abode in Upper Egypt. Others, who could not effect this, became anxious to ascertain the result of this singular property of

the river, and the precise time of its inundation. They found the soil greatly enriched by this overflow: experience taught them how to avail themselves of it; and the land became like a well-cultivated garden. In looking for the signs which predicted this important overflow of the Nile, they discerned one which afterwards gave rise to a symbol which may serve as an *example* of that necessity in which ancient types originated, and of that idolatry to which they subsequently conducted. The inundation was preceded by an annual wind, "which blowing from north to south, about the time of the passing of the sun under the stars of the Crab, drove the vapours towards the south, and gathered them" in Abyssinia, where the source of the Nile lies; which, causing in that country considerable rains, produced the overflow of the river, and inundated Egypt. "without having had the least rain there." The inundation followed; but the wind, which was the infallible signal of the rising of the waters, was not, in strength and duration, the same from one year to another; and as the measure of the overflow depended upon this, it was necessary to look out for a more exact sign. This signal was the appearance of one of the most brilliant stars in the heavens, which, about two months prior to the inundation, had been rendered almost invisible by the sun, but when it became disengaged from the rays of

that luminary, and ascended the horizon in the morning a little before break of day, it became the public mark of attention; and no time was to be lost in preparing for the overflow of the river and its consequences. The Egyptians called this magnificent monitor *Tayaut**, the *Dog*; sometimes *Anubis*, the *Barker*; because "it then did, with regard to every family, what a faithful dog does, who warns the whole house of the approach of thieves;"—it warned them of their danger, and its name was then significant; but to this day, and among nations which have lost the import of the title, it is called the *Dog-star*. The connection between this star and the rising of the river gave it commonly the name of the *Nile-star*; in the Hebrew and Egyptian language, *Siḥor*; in the Greek and Latin, *Sirius*, the astronomical name which it still bears. But it became necessary to transmit their observations to others, and to perpetuate them to their children; that posterity might avail themselves of the experience of their ancestors. For this purpose symbols were needed. Observing that the Hawk, the inhabitant of the north, at the return of the mild weather, and when she casts

* Written by some, *Thaut*, or *Thoth*. The Rosetta Stone gives ΘΟΥΘ, *Thouth*.
Σελπός.

her feathers, directs her course southward, the Egyptians designed the annual wind preceding the overflow of the Nile, and blowing from north to south, by the figure of that bird. The star which they had called the *Dog*, and the *Monitor*, they also denominated the *Door-keeper*, when they intended to consider it as closing their old year, and opening the new. Accordingly, when it was referred to as marking the time of the inundation, the symbol was the human form surmounted by a dog's head, and called *Anubis*; when it signified the close and commencement of the year, it was delineated as the human form having *two* faces, the one old, the other young, implying the departed and the new-born period of time; an image which was afterwards the *Janus* of the Romans. The *Sphinx* was another type, which, as the inundation lasted in its full strength two months, during the time the sun passed through the signs of the *Lion* and the *Virgin*, was intended to measure the height of the waters, to determine when they overflowed too much to afford any agricultural advantage; and was composed of the body of a lion and the head of a virgin—symbolizing the constellations of those months.

Not to pursue further the inquiry into the rise

† With wings at his heels, to denote the necessity of instantaneous flight.

of those innumerable symbols which were either philosophical or natural types, it may be sufficient to remark, in reference to the *progress* of those signs so well understood in the mother-country, that when the Phœnicians copied them from the Egyptians, either misunderstanding their import, or careless of preserving it, and transmitted them to Greece, whence they were conveyed to Rome, an inexplicable system of idolatry arose out of them.* The Sphinx was described as a monster, by the Grecian Poets who understood not the symbol; and who ascribing to it a real existence, and attributes corresponding with the ferocity and enormity of its form, "gave to airy nothing a local habitation and a name," in their elegant but delusive compositions. The only rational use made of the *Anubis*, or Dog-star, was the single import of its being the signal of the closing and opening year. When copying the figure of the double countenance, they retained the obvious allusions of youth and age, in the presiding power over the expiring and renovated season. It would be easy, if time and the occasion would suffer the inquiry, to pursue this subject, and to shew

* It is probable that these things were understood, partially at least, by the Grecian Philosophers, who travelled purposely to Egypt: and these constituted the substance of their sacred mysteries. Among the Poets, they degenerated into fable; and were so received by the Romans.

what was the origin of certain philosophical and astronomical emblems, among the Egyptians, and in what way they became perverted by European nations; so that out of the simple types of natural objects, the elegant and seductive system of Grecian and Roman Mythology arose. The instances produced are sufficient to discover the first link of this stupendous chain, which bound so long the intellectual faculties of the mass of mankind—until Christianity arose to break the iron bondage from the necks of oppressed and corrupted nations.

I will only remark, that under the idolatry of Greece, Plato sought moral and philosophical principles; and although perhaps but little acquainted with the origin of these symbols—the Egyptians themselves having lost much of their original import, or sunk it in an idolatry still more contemptible than that of Greece, the types being so much the more simple—yet this great philosopher and moralist deduces from the Eleusinian mysteries of his day many noble inferences of an intellectual character, which have been transmitted to us by his disciples, and his admirers in successive ages. He makes the dreadful, but fabulous, descriptions of the Infernal Regions in the Poets, with the tormenting cares and cruel enemies described, bear upon the calamities to which the spirit is exposed in its union with a corrupt and sinful nature; representing the external evils connected with a material

existence—the life of the spirit merged in the body, as only a dream ; and the vices which infest it, as calamities, which, if symbolized, can never wear forms too monstrous, shapes too hideous, attributes too degrading*.

It would not be proper, in this part of the subject, to omit the Indian Deities, with which Europe has formed of late years an extensive acquaintance, from the power and sovereignty of Great Britain in the East. These are of uncouth forms, and unseemly proportions—monstrous in their shapes, and multiform in their limbs. The object of such conformations is, to avoid multiplying individual figures. Designing to represent the Divinity, or some natural cause—every limb is an effect—every symbol is an attribute. The key, the flower, the dart, the lyre, the shield, with which the hundred hands are armed, each bearing it's own emblem, carries to the mind of the Eastern philosopher the impression of some perfection of the Infinite, or of some great operation of Nature; while the common people are abused, like the multitude of old, with fables, and look not beyond the distorted image beneath whose ponderous car they prostrate themselves and are crushed to death. The Grecians, when they borrowed Egyptian symbols, and made them idols,

* See Notes at the end of this Lecture.

unacquainted with their occult meanings, stripped them of those decorations of dress and excesses of figure which appeared to them disproportionate and preposterous, moulded them into all the elegance of the human form, and clothed them with the airy garb of Europe; not knowing that every excrescence (as it appeared to them) which they pruned was an attribute of the Divinity, or a quality of Nature, in the intention of the framer of the symbol; who regarded less the proportions of the type, than the things which he designed to represent; and by these means (these improvements as Greece would call them) the idolater was led still farther from the import of the object of his idolatry.

This leads us to speak of the earliest characters of writing, which were signs of things: in other words, *Types*. By tracing a likeness to sensible objects by rudely painting or drawing the representation of any given events, facts were first recorded. "By historical pictures the Mexicans are said to have transmitted the memory of the most important transactions of their empire." The difficulties attending the multiplication of such delineations, and the imperfection of the record which they at last established, induced man to seek less complicated symbols, capable of connecting events with greater facility. Hence arose *hieroglyphics*, or symbols which are made to stand for

invisible objects ; the inventor of which was also Egypt. A circle signified the Deity, because it described the orb of the sun, which they considered the most magnificent natural emblem of God. A serpent was the symbol of life and health ; not, as is generally thought, because the serpent casts it's skin, and thus renovates it's youth in appearance, but (according to an ingenious writer*) “ because, “ among most of the Eastern nations, as the Phœ- “ nicians, Hebrews, Arabians, and others, with “ whose language that of Egypt had an affinity, “ the word *Heva* equally signifies *life* and a *serpent*. “ The name of ‘ HIM WHO IS,’ the great name “ *JEHOVAH*, thence derives it's etymology. *Heve*, “ or the name of the common mother of mankind, “ comes likewise from the same word. Life could “ not be painted, but it might be marked out by “ the figure of the animal which bears it's name†.” From this symbol came that of Eternity. If a serpent signified *life*, the same animal with his tail in his mouth, presenting a circle, signified life without termination. If the serpent signified *health*, we understand why Esculapius, the god of medicine, was delineated with a serpent entwining a staff:—the staff was his sceptre ; the serpent, the effect of his

* The Abbé Plûche.

† The symbol of the *Hevites* was the *serpent*; whose leader, Cadmus, on their expulsion by Joshua, is classically represented to have planted the place of their subsequent residence with *dragons'* teeth.

authority—restoration. The Romans seem to have unconsciously borrowed the attributes of this idol from the Egyptian symbol. Perhaps we find here, also, an occult meaning of the symbol of Moses (who was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians) in raising the Brazen Serpent—at once the representation of the animal by which they suffered, and the symbol of life. It is true, this was done in no conformity to idolatrous Egypt, but in express obedience to the command of God; but it is not impossible that God himself might condescend to appoint a type (as in the case of the Perpetual Fire) so well understood among all Eastern nations. Then carry on the idea, and you find in this idolatrous symbol a Scriptural type; when “to this sign, of itself of no virtue, was substituted, and lifted up among the people, the efficacious sign of salvation—the Author of life himself.” For, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so hath the Son of Man been lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

From hieroglyphics, writing advanced to simple arbitrary marks, not bearing any analogy to the objects signified, but agreed upon between the parties who gave, and who received, information; therefore perfectly understood by them. The Peruvians contrived to make cords of different colours, knit into knots of different magnitudes, a medium

of communication. The empire of China uses, to this day, arbitrary marks, each significant of an idea, and expressing some one thing or object. These are, of course, greatly multiplied; and must necessarily, by their perplexity, retard the progress of science. It is said, that these arbitrary characters amount to no less than seventy thousand; some estimate them still more largely; and to write and read them to perfection, consumes the labours of a life. These characters have transfused themselves so far among their neighbours, over a considerable extent of Eastern territory, that we are informed, “the Japanese, the Tonquinese, and the Coreans, who speak different languages from one another, and from the inhabitants of China, use, however, the same written character with them; and by this means correspond intelligibly with each other in *writing*, although ignorant of the *language* spoken in their several countries;—a plain proof that the Chinese characters are, like hieroglyphics, independent of language, signs of things, not of words*,”—in other words, *Types*. The momentous result of this astonishing fact is, that the Chinese characters, not being confined to China, but extending over all these different nations, the New Testament, being lately translated into the Chinese language, and printed in the Chinese character, by one of the Missionaries†, under the

* Dr. Blair. † Mr. Morrison.

patronage of the Missionary Society, is now accessible (supposing a proportionate number of copies can be gradually provided) to three hundred and thirty-three millions of people, constituting nearly half the population of the globe.

The only example of this arbitrary character which Europe possesses, is in our arithmetical figures or ciphers†, which we have derived from the Arabians‡; and which, like the hieroglyphics of Egypt, or the types of China, are significant marks, denoting the number for which they stand, and are accordingly equally understood by all the nations who have adopted the use of them, however variously they are named, according to the genius of each respective language; and are indifferently employed and apprehended by the English, French, Spanish, Italian, and other people.

Upon this basis, it has been thought, with reason, that it would be possible to establish an universal organ of communication. It is only necessary for nations to fix upon a given character, to express a given object; then each would call the thing signified by the name appropriated to it in his own language, and the type would be understood throughout all the countries thus agreed in the symbol, said

The tediousness of this mode of communication

1, 2, 3, 4, &c.

† The Arabians, probably, from the Indians.

by types for single objects, still more than it's ambiguity, led to the invention of letters—the combinations of which should express the variety of sounds employed in speech; and thus, in place of types for things, marks for sound obtained; by which simple signs, capable of an infinity of combination, the present facility of communicating our thoughts and wishes arose, and upon which it would be as superfluous as irrelevant to our object to speak further in this Lecture. So much analogy subsists between general symbols and those which we have immediately in view, that the discussion of the former, to that extent to which it has been carried, leaves us little more to do, than to produce the necessary exemplifications of the next branch of the subject; which is

II.—ON SCRIPTURAL TYPES.

It is necessary to shew wherein they *differ from Parables*, that the propriety of these preliminary observations may appear, and that the subject of the next Lecture may not be anticipated. *Types* relate always to existing objects, or to matters of fact; between which, and the thing signified, an analogy, or resemblance, subsists. They may, therefore, be natural or historical, derived from that which is an object of sense, or from any circumstance deduced from an authentic record. *Parables* do not suppose matters of fact, or objects of Nature;—objects of Nature being properly *simi-*

litudes; matters of fact, *types*: but *Parables* are imaginary circumstances, framed for the express purpose of elucidating some important doctrine, or conveying some intellectual and moral instruction.

Scripture Types relate to things spiritual, which can only be illustrated by those which are natural; and things eternal, which can only be apprehended through the medium of sensible objects. The process of vegetation becomes, therefore, a type of the advances of religious improvement; and the magnificence of the heavens, a type of the glory of the future world. "There is first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear;" thus "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,"—"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory: So also is the resurrection of the dead."—"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." What a magnificent display of the Divine operations is unfolded in this short and comprehensive passage! All that Reason could grasp, all that Philosophy could discover, is condensed; and in that condensed state is rendered palpable to the mind, by being placed in the most intelligible language. The whole range of being is produced in it's order; the character of each

component part is fixed; the comparative splendour of the one with the other, marked; and the most important religious truths discovered to be analogous to the constitution and course of Nature*. Celestial bodies are those orbs which we contemplate at a distance, the remotest radiance of which reaches us in a trembling and uncertain beam; which are stupendous in proportion as our judgment prevails over our senses, and represents the spark which a glowworm might rival, a sun, illuminating a system not inferior to that of which the whole globe is but an inconsiderable part. Terrestrial bodies are those which are properly the component part of this earth: more accurately, they are minerals and fossils; but in a larger acceptation of the term, they comprehend whatsoever moves on the surface of this world. When we include, in the term, animals and men, we launch into a new range of being: we find not simply matter, differently, infinitely modified, but animal life, with all its distinctions, and intellectual, with all its unbounded endowments and superior characteristics. It is thus that a chain of being is

* I have the pleasure to learn that this point is most happily proved, by Dr. HENLEY; whose work, entitled "*The Bible confirmed by Astronomy*," is about to be published. The learned Dr. shews, the Standing still of the Sun, the Retrogression of the Shadow on the Dial of Ahaz, and the Darkness at the Crucifixion, to be agreeable to all astronomical calculations, ancient and modern.

formed, between the terrestrial, and that order of existence which aspires to the highest class of the celestial. Each of these orders of being has it's peculiar excellence—it's *own* glory: a comparison is instituted both between things of the same kind, and existences of a different nature. Some beings excel others in magnificence; and in things of a similar kind there is a manifest difference in splendour and majesty. Thus the beautiful variety of Nature is made, by analogy, to illustrate a spiritual subject. It is the superior glory of the body after the resurrection, in comparison with it's present beauty; and the degrees of splendour which shall irradiate the redeemed in a future state.

The necessity of Types in the Scriptures arises from the nature of it's subjects. It has been observed by an excellent writer†, that “From the difficulty we are under, of comprehending such things as are above natural reason, the manner of the Scripture is as extraordinary as it's matter; and it must be so, from the necessity of the case. Of all the objects of sense we have ideas, and our minds and memories are stored with them: but of invisible things we have no ideas, till they are pointed out to us by Revelation; and as we cannot know them immediately, such as they are in themselves, after the manner in which we know sensible objects, they

† Mr. Jones.

“ must be communicated to us by the mediation
“ of such things as we already comprehend.
“ For this reason the Scripture is found to
“ have a language of it's own, which doth not
“ consist of words, but of signs or figures taken
“ from visible things. It could not otherwise
“ treat of God, who is a spirit; and of the spirit
“ of man, and of a spiritual world; which no
“ words can describe. Words are the arbitrary
“ signs of natural things; but the language of
“ Revelation goes a step further, and uses some
“ things as the signs of other things; in conse-
“ quence of which, the world which we now see be-
“ comes a sort of commentary on the mind of God,
“ and explains the world in which we believe.”

Yet are all these symbols imperfect types of the thing signified. Revelation describes the future, by tracing resemblances between it and the present; sometimes by illustrations where there is no actual likeness; sometimes by comparisons instituted upon some faint analogy; and sometimes by contrasts arising out of palpable and striking differences. These are necessarily mingled, and blended in the descriptions given us of futurity. There can be no resemblance between this and the heavenly world so perfect, as not to afford a marked difference; and even an obvious contrast: the analogy can only subsist in part, while the dissimilarity is general and incalculable. In tracing the

resemblance, we are obliged to raise the present to a sublimity of which it is really incapable; to strike out or conceal or supply its deficiencies; to shed upon it a glory not its own; and even then we have only a faint shadow of the substance which we are attempting to grasp and secure. For this reason, language so figurative is employed; and for this reason, the figure has always something additional, something unearthly—some qualities which do not belong to the thing from which it is borrowed. These images are all images of grandeur, of religion, or of repose; or rather, they unite and amalgamate all these things. Heaven is both a palace and a temple, and a rest. It is all—it is neither of these; because, while it combines, it exceeds them all. You are every moment reminded, by the casting of the image, that it is but a figure, and that it cannot shadow out to the imagination the things which it was intended to symbolize.

These types are *borrowed* from various sources. From *Nature*,—therefore the Day-spring becomes a symbol of the grace and glory of the REDEEMER, communicated to this perishing world. “Through
“the tender mercy of our God, the Day-spring
“from on high hath visited us, to give light to
“them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of
“death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

From the *Law*,—the splendid ceremonials of

which all prefigured the priesthood and atonement of Christ :—" Seeing that there are priests who offer gifts according to the Law; who serve unto the example and *shadow* of heavenly things."—" It was necessary, therefore, that the *patterns* of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves, with better sacrifices than these. For the Law, having a *shadow* of good things to come, and *not the very image* of the things, could never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect."—" Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God, for us."

From *miraculous operations* :—therefore the passage through the Red Sea, and the occurrences of the journey of the Israelites through the Desert, are all employed as types of spiritual subjects. Jesus represents the Manna as symbolizing himself, when he says, " I am that bread of life."

From *historical events*—and some which we should not have conceived to be typical, had they not been used as symbols by the Inspired Writers. We have an example in connection with the text of this evening. The Apostle Paul thus treats some historical circumstances in the family of Abraham. " Abraham had two sons; the one by

“ a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman. But
 “ he who was of the bond-woman was born after
 “ the flesh, but he of the free-woman was by pro-
 “ mise. Which things are an allegory ; for these
 “ are the two Covenants : the one from the Mount
 “ Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is
 “ Agar. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia,
 “ and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and
 “ is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem
 “ which is above is free, which is the mother of
 “ us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren
 “ that bearest not ; break forth and cry, thou that
 “ travailest not ; for the desolate has many more
 “ children than she which hath an husband. Now
 “ we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children
 “ of Promise. But as then he that was born after
 “ the flesh persecuted him that was born after the
 “ spirit, even so is it now. Nevertheless what
 “ saith the Scripture ? Cast out the bond-woman
 “ and her son : for the son of the bond-woman
 “ shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman.
 “ So then, brethren, we are not children of the
 “ bond-woman, but of the free.”

From eminent *persons*.—Joseph, Moses, David,
 and the Prophets, were so many types of characters,
 or circumstances, under the Gospel dispensation ;
 and are so considered, both by St. Stephen, in his
 defence before the Council ; and by St. Paul, in
 his enumeration of distinguished characters in the

Eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.—Elijah was a type of the Harbinger of the MESSIAH; John the Baptist: and the parallel between them, in manner of life, in personal courage, in austerities, in preaching, even in raiment, might be easily established.

Distinguished *places* were types of spiritual and eternal things. The Church is often called Mount Sion: and the Apostle connects this spot with the sacrifices of the Law—a symbol both of the present and future Church, when he says: “We
“are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city
“of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and
“to an innumerable company of angels, to the
“general assembly and church of the first-born,
“which are written in heaven; and to God the
“Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made
“perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New
“Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that
“speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

St. John again presents the glories of heaven under the title of the New Jerusalem; and almost copies the description of the city in Ezekiel's vision. It will be evident, that each of these observations might be abundantly amplified, were it necessary to the illustration of the subject.

The types which remain in the Christian Church are two, which we call *Sacraments*;—Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. These are continued by the

absolute prescription of Jesus: the one as the ordinance of initiation into his Church, the symbol of inward and spiritual purification; the other, as the pledge of our Saviour's love, the evidence of the perpetuity of his presence with his people, and the symbol of our vital communion with him.

The important *uses* of types may be seen in the reference which they bear to spiritual and eternal things. They form a connection between earth and heaven. They resemble the mysterious ladder which Jacob saw in his vision; the foot of which rested upon the ground, but its top reached to the throne of God; and above it sat JEHOVAH himself, dispensing blessings; while angels ascended and descended, as the ministers of his benevolence. We cannot look abroad into Nature, without receiving instruction and admonition. These various and important uses will appear more fully as we pursue the object of these Lectures.

We have seen the danger of symbols, when they have been separated from their objects:—that which was designed to lead the spirit to God, became the occasion of seducing it from him. But let us guard against extremes. It is possible to strip religious worship too naked; and, in refusing ceremonies altogether, to involve ourselves in mysticism, or sink into indifference. Man is a compound being. Were he all spirit, we might banish all sensible objects from his religious ser-

vices: but as he is also flesh, he requires to be animated and instructed; and the senses may be made the medium, both of enlightening his understanding, and affecting his heart.

While we diligently examine the types by which God has symbolized eternal and divine things, and thankfully avail ourselves of their assistance, let us beware of weakening their authority, and diminishing their just effect, by carrying this mode of thinking too far, and suffering the fancy to prevail over the judgment. Some persons have presumed to spiritualize every historical incident and every plain fact in the Scriptures. To the ignorant this may appear to widen the range of Revelation; but in reality it contracts it. The Word of God is a perfect whole, composed of many parts; the strength and congruity of which must depend upon their maintaining exactly the arrangement which the mind of the Deity devised, and which His hand executed. Like a well-compacted city, it demands our admiration, but can receive neither addition nor embellishment from human wisdom. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide, even unto death."

NOTES.

THE opinions of Plotinus and Plato, referred to in the preceding Lecture, p. 53, as connecting philosophical sentiments with popular fictions, are thus expressed. *Γινώσκων δὲ ἡ μεταλήψις αὐτοῦ. Γίνεται γὰρ παντάπασιν ἐν τῷ τῆς ἀνομοιότητος τόπῳ, ἵνα δὲ εἰς αὐτὴν εἰς βόρεον σκοτεινὸν ἴσται πρῶτον.—ἀποθνήσκει οὖν, ὡς ψυχὴ ἀν' θανάτῳ· καὶ ὁ θάνατος αὐτῇ, καὶ ἔτι ἐν τῷ σώματι βίβαπτισμένη, ἐν ὕλῃ ἰστί καταδύναται, καὶ πλησθῆναι αὐτῆς· καὶ ἐξελθούσης ἐκεί· κτεῖσθαι, ἵως ἀναδραμῇ καὶ ἀφελῇ πῶς τὴν ἄψιν ἐκ τοῦ βόρεον· καὶ τοῦτο ἰστί τὸ ἐν ἔδῳ ἔλθοντα ἐπικαταδραβεῖν.*

PLOTIN, in *Ennead*, I. lib. viii. p. 80.

Ὅς ἂν μὴ ἔχῃ διορίσασθαι τῷ λόγῳ, ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἀφελὼν τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδίαν, καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν μάχῃ διὰ πάντων ἐλίγχειν διέξων, μὴ κατὰ δόξαν ἀλλὰ κατ' οὐσίαν προθυμοῦμενος ἐλίγχειν, ἐν πᾶσι τοῦτοις ἅπτασι τῷ λόγῳ διαπεριέχεται, οὔτε αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν οὐδὲν φήσεις εἶδέναι τὸν οὕτως ἔχοντα, οὔτε ἄλλο ἀγαθὸν οὐδέν, ἀλλ' εἰ πῇ εἰδῶλου τινὸς ἐφάπτεται, δόξῃ οὐκ ἐπιστήμῃ ἐφάπτεσθαι· καὶ τὸν νῦν βίον ὀνειροπολοῦντα, καὶ ὑπναύοντα, πρὶν ἵνα ἐκ ἐξελθῇ, εἰς ἔδῳ πρότερον ἀφικόμενον τιλίως ἐπικαταδραβεῖν;

PLATO, *Reipub.* lib. vii.¹

See also Plato's *Phædo*; and Proclus, in his *Commentary on Plato's Politics*, p. 372; concerning sacerdotal and symbolical mythology.

The beautiful description given by Virgil of the Infernal Regions is thus held to shadow forth these philosophical sentiments:

“Vestibulum ante ipsum, primisque in faucibus Orci
Luctus, et ultrices posuere cubilia Cūræ;
Pallentesque habitant Morbi, tristisque Senectus,
Et Metus, et malesuada Fames, ac turpis Egestas;
Terribiles visu formæ: Lethumque, Labosque:
Tum consanguineus Lethi Sopor; et mala mentis

Gaudia;

Gaudia ; mortiferumque adverso in limine Bellum,
 Ferreique Eumenidum thalami, et Discordia demens,
 Vipereum crinem vittis innexa eruentis.

" In medio ramos annosaque brachia, pandit
 Ulmus, opaca, ingens : quam sedem Somnia vulgo
 Vana tenere ferunt, foliisque sub omnibus hærent.
 Multaque præterea variarum monstra ferarum ;
 Centauri in foribus stabulant, Scyllæque bifformes,
 Et centungeminus Briareus, ac bellua Lernæ
 Horrendum stridens, flammisque armata Chimæra,
 Gorgones, Harpyiæque, et forma tricorporis umbræ."

VIRG. *Æn.* VI.

"And surely it is impossible to draw a more lively picture of the
 "maladies with which a material nature is connected ; of the soul's
 "dormant condition through it's union with body ; and of the
 "various mental diseases to which, through such a conjunction, it
 "becomes unavoidably subject : for this description contains a three-
 "fold division ; representing, in the first place, the external evils with
 "which this material region is replete ; in the second place, intimating
 "that the life of the soul, when merged in body, is nothing but a
 "dream ; and in the third place, under the disguise of omniform and
 "terrific monsters, exhibiting the various vices of our irrational part."

Eleus. and Bacchic Myst. p. 27, 28. *Amst.*

Pindar ; Clement of Alexandria, in *Stromat.* lib. iii. (quoting Pindar) ;
 Plato in the *Cratylus* ; Philolaus, (preserved by Clem. Alex. ut supra,
 p. 413.) ; Pythagoras ; Synesius (*Hymn I.*) ; Pletho on the Oracles ; and
 others ; thus express themselves.

The *Discordia demens* of Virgil is an exact translation of the *Νέμει*
μαρτυρία of Empedocles : and he refers to this material abode, or
 the realms of generation. — See Hierocles, in *Aur. Carm.* p. 186.

LECTURE III.

ON SCRIPTURE PARABLES.

PSALM LXXVIII. 2, 3.

I will open my mouth in a Parable; I will utter dark sayings of old; which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

IN looking back upon remote ages, we have found considerable difficulty in tracing the customs of men to their origin, and in following well-known practices up to their principles. The perplexities attending inquiries after the wisdom and observances of former times arise from the brevity of human existence. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten: and if, by reason of strength, they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."—This was the standard fixed for human life, so far back as the days of Moses; who was himself an exception to the general rule, and lived to the age of an hundred and twenty, with an inextinguished vision, and an unabated vigour. To this last term the age of man was narrowed immediately after the Flood;

and while some of the Patriarchs exceeded it, most of the race of mankind fell short of it. Even the more confined limit which Moses names, is a boundary seldom reached by ourselves, or by our fathers. It is evident that this circle is too narrow, as an orbit of knowledge; and the accumulations of experience in so short a space of time could not be very considerable. Accordingly, Science has slowly advanced: it has required many generations, each in succession adding it's stores of observation to the information furnished by the preceding one, to measure out that scanty portion of instruction which we possess. In the mean while, the influence of time has been felt, erasing the characters of human experience almost as fast as they have been written; and the wisdom of our ancestors has been half lost in it's transmission to their posterity. They could glean but a little from the harvest of Nature; and this gleaning has been partly shed, as it passed into our garner.

It has been supposed, and not without reason, that the Antediluvians excelled in all arts and sciences. From lives so extended, connected with health and research, much might be expected. Whatever their attainments were, they were swept from the world by the deluge which spread over all it's habitable surface. The monuments of their greatness perished with them;—perished, without leaving even a fragment to tell how great they were!

The only memorials of the old world serve to confirm the fact of that destructive event, by which the works of man were destroyed, with their devoted artificers. The face of Nature seems to have undergone a total change; and the atmosphere and seasons a radical alteration. Either such a change must have taken place on the globe, or in the stamina of the human constitution. Whatever became the occasion, the fact is clear; the days of man upon earth are shortened; his knowledge and experience proportionably circumscribed; and the stores of primeval wisdom plundered and destroyed.

Besides the limitation of human wisdom on account of the brevity of life, the experience of former ages is lost through the imperfection of those symbols by which they vainly endeavoured to transmit their observations to future times. It is not possible to unravel all the types which remain on the monuments of Egyptian science. It is certain that these images of natural objects, or delineations of hidden causes, led those whom they were intended to instruct, still further into the mazes of ignorance; and this labyrinth terminated in the gloomy and polluted recesses of idolatry. They inflicted an injury when they meant to confer a benefit: for while they were unable to transmit correct impressions of their discoveries far beyond their own date, the symbols by which they attempted this benevolent purpose, in attracting the attention

of their posterity, seduced them from the track of Nature, by which they might have arrived at the same conclusions with their ancestors, but for the intervention of types which, unable distinctly to comprehend, they foolishly idolized. Had they lived longer, and observed more accurately the things which they intended to delineate, it is probable they would have been able to pourtray types more expressive of their object; as it is certain, the présent mode of writing is a medium of communication between one part of the world and another, and from age to age, more perfect than were those arbitrary characters to which the sciences of former times were consigned. These memorials also, imperfect as they were, had but a little longer date than their inventors. While the key to those which remain is lost, and we read them by conjecture, a few only of the original delineations survive; and many of these are totally inexplicable. This is a calamity inseparable from all terrestrial attainments. Time and accident moulder them away. Even the Pyramids are but wrecks of former grandeur: they lift their dark masses to the changeful clouds, and seem to bid defiance to years: but, in truth, the sands of the Desert gather around them, threatening, by slow but certain advances, to overwhelm them; and the Inscriptions which they once bore, are worn away by the winter's tempest. Thus, between the

limitation of knowledge occasioned by the shortness of human life; and the imperfection of the symbols which were intended to preserve the little that could be gained for the use of posterity; research into antiquity becomes irksome, and almost fruitless.

The things which were signified by these types remain. The sun knoweth his rising; and his going down; and the moon, her appointed seasons: "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, cold and heat, shall not cease." These revolving periods were noted by our fathers. The orbs which lighted them to their labours, now shine upon their graves. The moon sheds her pale beam upon the tottering ruins of those temples which were raised by idolatrous hands to her worship, and upon those earlier monuments which were intended to preserve the record of her courses:—the work and the architect have alike passed away! The stars of heaven preserve their orbits, and fulfil their destiny: yet these also have their fixed duration. Without entering into the controversy respecting the Poems of Ossian, who can dispute the beauty of the following Address to the Sun, the most magnificent of all these orbs, yet not exempt from the general ruin which awaits the visible creation. "O thou that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers! Whence are thy beams, O sun!

“thy everlasting light? Thou comest forth, in thy
“awful beauty; the stars hide themselves in the
“sky; the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the
“western wave. But thou thyself movest alone:
“who can be a companion of thy course? The
“oaks of the mountains fall; the mountains them-
“selves decay with years: the ocean shrinks and
“grows again: the moon herself is lost in heaven:
“but thou art for ever the same, rejoicing in the
“brightness of thy course. When the world is
“dark with tempests; when thunder rolls, and
“lightning flies; thou lookest, in thy beauty, from
“the clouds, and laughest at the storm. But to
“Ossian thou lookest in vain! for he beholds thy
“beams no more, whether thy yellow hair flows
“on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the
“gates of the west. But thou art, perhaps, like
“me, for a season: thy years will have an end.
“Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds, careless of the
“voice of the morning. Exult then, O sun!
“in the strength of thy youth. Age is dark, and
“unlovely; it is like the glimmering light of the
“moon, when it shines through broken clouds,
“and the mist is on the hills: the blast of the
“north is on the plain; the traveller shrinks in
“the midst of his journey.”

The long continuance of this order of Nature
has given occasion to Infidelity to deride the solemn
predictions of Revelation. “Scoffers in these last

"days say, Where is the promise of his coming ?
" For since the fathers fell asleep, all things con-
" tinue as they were from the beginning of the
" creation." It is most true, as the Apostle has
remarked, that they overlook the astonishing
changes which have already taken place on this
globe, the evidences of which cannot be overturned;
nor are they able to appreciate the Divine
forbearance, which lengthens out the space for
repentance, or the fidelity of that word upon
which the consummation of all things depends.
They are unable also to trace the actual influence
of time upon the grand machinery of Nature : it
is constructed upon a scale too large to fall within
the compass of their observation. We are assured,
and we believe the testimony, that the whole
creation is tending to it's dissolution. The heavens
and the earth are " waxing old, as doth a garment."
Time is hastening to complete his conquests, and
to finish his career. And as the great end of
Revelation is to teach us—" seeing all these things
" shall be dissolved—what manner of persons we
" ought to be, in all holy conversation and
" godliness ;" so no other, and no less an object, is
held in view by these discussions. Whether we
wander over the fields of ancient research, or
among the fragments of ruined greatness—whether
we surround you with the customs of former times,
or the habits of distant countries—the whole is

intended to bear upon this Volume, upon it's manner of teaching, upon it's important discoveries, upon it's awful and sublime instructions,—and to exhibit, at once, it's infinite superiority, and it's Divine authority.

The present Lecture is to be,

ON SCRIPTURE PARABLES :

and it is proposed to advert, first, to Ancient Signs; which will be found to connect Figures and Types with Parables; thus linking the subjects already discussed with that which is now to be examined. Then, to Parables in general, as they were employed in the earliest modes of instruction. And, lastly, to some examples of this method of teaching which occur in the Scriptures of the Old Testament; those of the New forming distinct subjects for future Lectures.

I. — ANCIENT SIGNS.

Ancient Signs will throw considerable light upon these inquiries, as they will serve to explain the general habits of those nations with whom Figurative Language and Parabolic instruction are most prevalent.

1. It appears to be the custom of the East to converse by *signs*. In private life, they issue their commands rather by motions than by words. A slight signal is distinctly understood, and instantly acted upon. To this singular custom the

Psalmist alludes*, when he says; "Unto thee lift
 "I up mine eyes; O thou that dwellest in the
 "heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look
 "unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes
 "of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so
 "our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that
 "he have mercy upon us." They transact even
 affairs of consequence by signals of this description;
 and when it is necessary to speak, speak in a low
 voice†. In public, they preserve the same custom;
 and at the Court especially a profound silence is
 observed. They multiply these signals, by different
 positions of the fingers, to an astonishing extent.
 The most important commands are issued in this
 way. An European Ambassador was conversing
 with an Oriental Prime-minister, when the High-
 Provost came into the hall of audience, and whis-
 pered in the ear of the Premier. "All the answer
 "which he received from him was *a slight horizontal*
"motion with his hand:" he resumed the conversation
 with great ease and cheerfulness. But that sign
 was a command for the execution of nine men,
 whose heads accordingly presented themselves on the
 outside of the first gate, as the Ambassador departed‡.

This practice will serve to point out the import
 of those signs employed by the Prophets to illustrate
 the various objects of their mission, the significance

* Ps. cxxiii. 1, 2.

† Fragments to Calmet.

‡ Baron du Tott.

of which might not otherwise be immediately apparent to us. "At the same time spake the Lord
 "by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go, and loose
 "the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy
 "shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking
 "naked and barefoot. And the Lord said, Like as
 "my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and bare-
 "foot three years, for a *sign* and wonder upon
 "Egypt and upon Ethiopia; So shall the king
 "of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners,
 "and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked
 "and barefoot, to the shame of Egypt. And they"
 (that is, the Israelites, who had confided too
 much in the alliances of those powers,) "shall
 "be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their ex-
 "pectation, and of Egypt their glory*." A simi-
 lar sign was commanded the prophet Jeremiah†.
 "Thus saith the Lord unto me, Go and get thee
 "a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put
 "it not in water. So I got a girdle, according to
 "the word of the Lord, and put it on my loins.
 "And the word of the Lord came unto me the
 "second time, saying, Take the girdle that thou
 "hast got, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go
 "to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the
 "rock. So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as
 "the Lord commanded me. And it came to pass
 "after many days, that the Lord said unto me,

* Is. xx. 2-5.

† Jer. xiii. 1-10.

“ Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from
 “ thence, which I commanded thee to hide there,
 “ Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took
 “ the girdle from the place where I had hid it;
 “ and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was pro-
 “ fitable for nothing. Then the word of the Lord
 “ came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord,
 “ After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah,
 “ and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil peo-
 “ ple, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in
 “ the imagination of their heart, and walk after other
 “ gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall
 “ even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.”

But the prophet Ezekiel abounds in these signs: scarcely was a prediction made by him without a corresponding sign accompanying it. In the commencement of his ministry, he was commanded to pass through all the apparatus and all the privations of a siege; and, by a singular process, to exhibit the number of years in which God had suffered the rebellions of Israel and of Judah, by lying on his left side three hundred and ninety days for Israel, and on his right forty days for Judah; each day, in both cases, being appointed for a year. His food was to be scanty and polluted; his water measured out in small proportions; and he was to subject himself to those calamities which were about to overwhelm his countrymen in the siege which he predicted. How striking must those signs have

been to a people, who were accustomed to such modes of communication! I cannot but think Our Lord's stooping down and writing with his finger on the ground, instead of answering those who brought to him the woman taken in adultery, was a sign of this description. Perhaps he wrote the very sentence which found it's way to the consciences of her accusers, when he addressed them and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Perhaps he intimated, that the accusation was written on the sand, soon to be effaced; for he pardoned, when he dismissed her; and said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

2. Another singular custom in the East was an association of things with names, which appears to amount to a *play upon words*. This was not only a common practice, and upon light occasions, but in the most awful solemnities, and with the most serious intentions. Instances occur perpetually, in the Prophets, of this assimilation of sense to sound, in accommodating the most weighty prophecies to the signification of the names of the places against which they were directed. Some memorable examples might be produced from the prophecies of dying Jacob, (and in such a moment he could not intend to trifle!) who shapes his blessings upon his sons according to the import of their respective names. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren

shall *praise*"—his name implying *praise*. Of Zebulun, which signifies *dwelling*, he predicts that he shall " *dwell at the haven of the sea.*" It is promised Dan, that he " *shall judge his people*"—to judge being the import of the name. Gad signifies a *troop*; and he says, " *A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.*" Asher, whose name implies *happiness*, is promised plenty and *prosperity*. The name Joseph means *adding*, and his blessing includes fruitfulness and *increase*. Our Lord himself employs this method, in reference to the name of Peter: " *Thou art Peter,*" or *a Rock*; " *and upon this rock will I build my church ;*"—assuredly upon the principle which that Apostle had just avowed, and not upon himself; yet the promise turning upon the name of him to whom it was addressed, is an illustration of this mode of speaking. The practice is prevalent still among the Orientals: and some Arabian proverbs might be produced which would prove this point*, did it not sufficiently rest upon Scripture authority.

3. *Metaphorical terms* are frequently blended with general expressions; and these give Eastern language a parabolic cast, even upon ordinary occasions. The Turks denominate the pestilence, *The arrow of God*; and the same term is employed, in connection with the pestilence, by the Psalmist, when he declares the security of the righteous

* Fragments to Calmet.

amidst danger of every description*. Death is described, in the Koran, as an *angel*, to whom a distinct name is given†. The Psalmist says, (and the words were applied to the Redeemer during his pilgrimage,) “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,”—more correctly, “*melted me*‡.” This appears to be an allusion to an Oriental custom, for those who feel themselves aggrieved, and who wish to appeal to the monarch, to carry in their hands “a kind of match, lighted and smoking; which is considered as the allegorical emblem of the fire that consumes their soul§.” And this practice presents in a new and striking point of observation that beautiful promise in Isaiah relative to the Saviour: “*The smoking flax shall he not quench—He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*” He shall not refuse the appeal of the oppressed, but shall deliver them from their wrongs, and redress their grievances||. Metaphorical terms blend with general expressions in all languages: in the East, they take their character from the luxuriance of the scenery, and from their prevailing customs. These, without attention, are lost to Europeans.

4. The most awful events are frequently predicted in a *metaphorical form*. It has been already

* Ps. xci. 5.

† *Azrail*, or *Azrael*. See Sale's Korān, c. ii. p. 6. Note. Called also, by the Persians, *Mordad*; or *Asuman*; the Rabbins and Arabians, as in the Korān; the Chaldee Paraphrasts, *Malk-ad-monsa*: by others, *Samaël*.

‡ אכל.

§ Peyssonnel.

|| Fragments to Calmet.

remarked, that Ezekiel abounds in typical representations; and it is no less to be observed, that his prophecies are delivered usually in a strain highly metaphorical. An invaluable writer[†] has made it appear, that to preserve the congruity of the predictions, relative to the destruction of Tyre, in that prophet, we must consider him as speaking of this maritime state under the allegory of a ship, describing her *construction*—the keel, carvings, masts, oars, sail, banner, awnings, with all the insignia of ancient vessels; her *company*, consisting of rowers, commanders, mariners, and warriors; her *foreign connections*, her *inland merchandise*, with all their varieties: and after an eloquent detail of these, this magnificent vessel is *wrecked*, with all her stores, upon her own seas, and amidst the sympathy and outcries of the nations with whom she traded. Whoever will read the chapter*, with this image in his mind, will find it replete with beauty, and be able to surmount some difficulties, not easily removed on any other principle.

Having adverted to these singularities of Oriental customs, as elucidating certain metaphorical expressions in the Scriptures, and bearing upon the subject, we pass on to examine

II.—PARABLES IN GENERAL.

The *origin* of Parables, so far as we can trace it, appears to have been with the Hebrews. It is

† The ingenious Editor of Calmet, in the volume of Fragments.
* Ezek. xxvii.

most certain, that the oldest specimen of this kind of writing and speaking is to be found in the Scriptures, which carry us, far beyond the earliest fragments of antiquity, into the first ages of the world. The earliest Greek writers were poets, who blended philosophy with allegory. The earliest Egyptian writing consisted in symbols, which, as we have seen, gave birth to this kind of composition. It is a remarkable circumstance, that all the names of the primary Grecian and Roman gods may be traced back to terms employed by the Egyptians in reference to their types, and expressing the nature or character of the thing signified by them; and that the Egyptian tongue bears such an affinity to the Hebrew, as to afford the clearest presumptive evidence that it was derived thence. Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto, may be traced to an Egyptian or Hebraic derivation; and even the names, Orpheus, Linus, Museus (derived from the same root as Moses), may be thus unravelled; so that it is difficult to determine where the fabulous history, arising from mistaken symbols, closes, and the record of true events and personages commences. These names all shew the dependance of worship and customs, among different nations, upon the Hebrews, in their language and ceremonies*. It can scarcely be denied, that the Egyptian philosophy was borrowed from the Hebrews, either from

* See Note at the end of Lecture.

patriarchal tradition or from the Scriptures. This point has been laboured and demonstrated by the painful researches of the most eminent scholars: and this once settled, the philosophy of the Eastern nations follows of course, it being confessedly traduced from the Egyptian. With the substance, they also adopted the forms; and that parabolic mode of instruction which distinguishes to this day the East, passed over Europe.

The *prevalence* of Parables, through all antiquity, is indisputable. Aristotle calls a philosopher, a *lover of fabulous tradition*†, as folding up the principles of true wisdom in the veil of fiction. The uncertainty in what class we ought to place Orpheus, whether among the race of living men, or among the imaginary gods and heroes which fancy produced from Egyptian symbols and their characteristic epithets, induces us to look to Homer, as furnishing the earliest exemplification of this mythologic instruction. His matchless poems presented to the ancients a system of parabolic philosophy; and were so considered by the most eminent of their sages. While they adopted this mode of teaching, they made it subservient to their own purposes; and so constructed their parables as to disguise the sources whence they derived them. After the poets, philosophers employed this

† φιλόμυθος.

method to convey their instructions. The fables of Philostratus, and of Æsop, proceed on this principle. The mode of teaching by fables among the Greeks is first ascribed to Hesiod: nor are all the fables assigned to Æsop the invention of that sage; but he seems to have brought this parabolic method to great perfection. Pythagoras taught by emblems, and pointed enigmatical sentences. Plato, whose sublime philosophy has procured for him the title of *divine*, conveyed his sentiments by metaphorical delineations; and frequently guards his readers against terminating their researches in his allegories, but exhorts that they should, through the metaphor, penetrate to the things concealed under his images and symbols. This mode he borrowed from the Hebrews and Egyptians. He even sometimes mentions Syrian parables; but he concealed his translations from the Jews, partly because their separation from all nations caused them to be held in hatred and contempt, and partly to secure to himself the consideration of having taught, by this fascinating and useful mode, to a greater extent, and in a more beautiful form, than others*. All the philosophers adopted the parabolic manner, more or less, until the times of Aristotle; who first took from philosophy the veil of fiction, and clothed it in a dress more simple.

* Gale's Court of the Gentiles.

The *uses* which were made of Parables were various and dissimilar: some of them must excite pity, and others demand censure. To hide "the nakedness of the land," they were sometimes adopted. Where but little information was possessed, it was attempted to enhance its value, by giving to it an air of mystery,—and, to conceal its scantiness, by the multiplication of symbols, diversified in their form, but frequently importing the same thing. When such knowledge as they possessed was dealt out to the multitude by little and little, and clothed in a garb so obscure yet so attractive, the hidden stores of wisdom were presumed to be inexhaustible.

If this effort to cover ignorance deserves our pity, another motive attached by the ancients, especially their priests, to symbols and parables, demands censure;—it was, to reserve such knowledge as they had to themselves; or to communicate it partially and slowly to those who could afford to purchase it. It was their maxim, that wisdom should not be had unbought; and while some were initiated, by the influence of wealth or rank, into their mysteries, the multitude were abused with the wildest fables, and left to the miserable degradation of the grossest idolatry. How unlike His benevolent system, who, while he brought Parables to the highest perfection, unfolded the mysteries of the Kingdom of God to

all who desired to know them ; unlocked his treasures of wisdom and knowledge to the meanest capacity ; and pronounced—as the evidence of his divine mission, as the character of his religion, as of equal weight with his miracles—the generous sentiment, “ The poor have the Gospel preached unto them.” He rose, like the sun, upon “ the palpable obscure ” of Heathenism : he stood as God amidst the chaos and darkness of Philosophy, and said, “ Let there be light—and there was light.”

It ought not to be denied, that in the earliest ages of parabolic teaching, and apart from the selfish motives which afterwards disgraced it, some noble purposes were answered by it ;—it tended to excite curiosity, and a thirst for information. That which was seen, had a character so sublime, yet so mysterious, that the inquiring mind became anxious to learn more : and when this desire is awakened, the difficulties attending the acquisition of knowledge will stimulate, but never daunt, the ardent spirit. * This kind of excitement is that which alone is necessary to distinction : with it nothing is impossible to man : without it, attainments will be mean, and tardily acquired. And a wiser and happier method to communicate it could not have been suggested, than the parabolic mode of teaching ; because, enough is revealed to interest,—enough is kept back to call forth application. In

youthful minds this position meets with abundant illustration : we must try to reach the heart, through the medium of the senses, and in the exercise of the imagination.

Another advantage in connection with Parables was, that they served to impress more firmly upon the mind, whatever was received through their instrumentality. The idea was kept alive, by the sensible object connected with it, presenting itself every day, in every place, under almost every form. As it was rendered more tangible, in the first instance, by being so clothed, it was afterwards more easily retained. The mind also busied itself in separating the sentiment from the image—in re-combining them—in comparing them—in trying their analogy in various ways : and thus amusement became blended with information ; the latent powers of the spirit were called forth ; its faculties were employed ; and more was achieved by this excitement than by the mere sentiment first communicated,—the remote advantages were far greater than the good that was immediately apparent. To exercise the mind constantly, to present it with useful subjects of meditation, is to effect more, for the happiness and interest of the individual so excited and employed, than if we could at once communicate all the discoveries of science, and enrich with all the stores of literature.

The *disadvantages* of this mode of instruction,

in a dark and sensual age, must not be concealed ; it obscured the truth too much. It was not a glass framed for the purpose of beholding, through a darkened medium, the insufferable glories of the sun ; but it was a mist so dense, that the shadow of death brooded upon the nations. The type occupied the front ground ; the thing signified was cast too much into the shade. Parables, as well as symbols, were misapprehended, and, conjointly, produced idolatry. Those who undertook to teach, were themselves deplorably ignorant of the figures which they had borrowed ; and ignorance could only propagate its own likeness. To the most sober judgment, this method of communication renders it difficult to separate truth from fables : great transactions are disguised ; fact and fiction are mingled ; history finds it almost impracticable to draw the line with accuracy ; and records become perplexed, which might have been otherwise luminous. The judgment was sacrificed to the imagination ; the taste was cultivated rather than the understanding. This was a partial evil in the beginning, which led to a disastrous issue : the principles were neglected, and the passions inflamed, in this process ; symbols spiritual in their import, led to things sensual ; and the light and variegated robe worn by philosophy, to attract observation in the first instance, became the meretricious garb of unchecked licen-

tiousness. Witness the shameless rites of Paganism—the immodest tales of poetry—the gross fables of gods and heroes. And need I point out the issue? Every vile and filthy passion, that the fallen nature of man engendered, lifted up it's unblushing front, sanctioned by the holy and abused name of religion,—protected and encouraged by human laws, and celebrated in the too exquisite and prostituted page of the seducing poet. To produce examples, would be to pollute the subject. To pursue this part of the discussion, could only present the mortifying evidences of the desperate depravity of the human heart. We turn, therefore, to a fairer scene,—the use of this instructive mode of teaching, without it's abuse, in the examples of

III.—SCRIPTURE PARABLES.

The term is employed in the Scriptures in a vast variety of significations. *Proverbs*—sententious communications, relating to men and manners, bear this name. Such are the *Proverbs of Solomon*. When the Disciples said to the Saviour, “Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb;” they meant, out of his usual method of teaching by parables, or enigmatical sentences. Although a different word is employed*, this is the

* *procipla*—implying a *dark saying* of any kind; although it's derivation would lead one to expect it intended any *common mode of speaking*.

evident import of the passage. *Poetry*, because it abounds naturally with metaphorical language—especially when it stands connected with predictions, which always borrow sensible objects as their medium—is called a parable. Thus Job, and Balaam, are said to “take up their parables,” whenever their sublime addresses commence. The term is also applied to lighter subjects, produced in seasons of festivity. Such was the *riddle* of Sampson. It is a practice still common in the East to propose enigmas for solution to a party met for entertainment. The equivocation in the terms employed,—of strength, literally applied to the lion, and metaphorically, as applied to the senses, (rendered, “what is sweeter than honey? what is stronger than a lion?” in the solution,) gives the construction of the ambiguity that cast which is considered, in the Scriptures, parabolic. We must not omit to remark, that the term Parable is sometimes employed as a term of *reproach*. Thus it is threatened, concerning the magnificent temple of Solomon, in the event of the Israelites forsaking the God of their fathers—“This house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a *parable* and a bye-word among all nations.” Our translators have rendered the passage “*a proverb*,” as best comporting with the acceptation of the term in our language: but this only proves, that ‘parable’

with them, and 'proverb' with us, are, in certain cases, synonymous terms.

The *purity* of Scripture Parables is one grand characteristic of their pre-eminence. What grandeur, what perfection attaches to them! The most insignificant object in nature, selected for spiritual purposes, is instantly elevated and ennobled; it excites, irresistibly, the most powerful interest. Human genius, with all its powers, and all its application, moves in a narrow circle: but what has not Revelation pressed into its service in the world of nature, from the meanest production of the earth, to the most magnificent orb in the heavens? and what has it touched, which it has not transformed and dignified? Connect with this grandeur of design and execution, those great and good effects which it has uniformly produced and established. No evil intention, no corrupt influence, can be charged upon its parables. Not one vile passion finds countenance in its use of the senses; not one ignoble sentiment appears in connection with all its illustrations; not one frivolous principle enters into all the variety of its teaching: it is always wise, solemn, majestic, and happy in its subjects and in its elucidations.

The *uses* of Parables in the Bible might be inferred from their origin and their general applications: but as these have been seen connected with mean and evil purposes in other writings, it is

necessary to detail them, to shew that here we have the good upmixed with any evil. That they sometimes were intended to *amuse*, is evident from the riddle of Sampson, already named : but this only proves, that the Bible, in it's biography, represents the individual as he was ; while the customs of the day being admitted, become a pledge for the authenticity of the narrative ; and furnishes an inference no less important, that it never censures or relaxes the bonds of society, in any of the blameless forms under which it may be found to exist. Parables were often designed to *rouse*—to touch the conscience, and to affect the heart : and under this attractive garb, truth often found the means to elude prejudice, and to enthrone herself on the seat of judgment, before the passions had gained intimation that she had obtained admittance into the bosom. We intentionally wave the illustration of this point, reserving it to that ample exemplification of the position which will present itself in our Lord's Parables. We therefore find them commonly adopted in cases which called for *censure* ; lest the pride of the offender should be prematurely alarmed, or his temper unduly irritated. Few men can bear reproof ; and in proportion to the consciousness of it's justice, will be the soreness of the mind subjected to it's discipline. Nothing requires more wisdom in administration than correction : not merely that the

reprover should be certain of the grounds on which he proceeds, but that he should manage the application of it with wisdom, tenderness, and delicacy. Parables furnished a happy medium of communicating disagreeable, but important truths. To *instruct*, was the grand end of all the diversified modifications of allegorical representations in the Scriptures: they are “given by inspiration of God; and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good word and work:”—and this great object was most happily secured by the modes of teaching adopted; sometimes, plain and pointed precepts; at others, parables skilfully adapted to the circumstances of the case contemplated.

After these remarks, it seems only necessary to produce *examples* from the Scriptures, of these different objects of instruction by Parables. We begin with the parable of Jotham*—the oldest extant—produced upon an occasion which fired all the feelings of the man who framed and delivered it. Abimelech, the son of the concubine of Gideon, had, after the death of his father, procured to himself the government of Israel; and, to render his usurped authority the more secure,

* Judges ix. 7—20.

had sealed it with the blood of the sons of his father by his wives, to the amount of seventy persons. Jotham, the youngest, alone found means to escape this remorseless slaughter: and availing himself of an early opportunity of convening the men of Shechem, the seat of his unnatural brother's government, not daring to trust himself among them, he cried from the summit of a neighbouring hill, and addressed to them the following parable; which contains, in its spirit and application, one of the finest possible specimens of reproach and *censure* to be found in this figurative language. "Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you!"—an awful invocation, spoken with a solemn tongue, which could not fail to arrest their attention.—

"The trees went forth, on a time, to anoint a king over them: and they said unto the olive-tree, 'Reign thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth god and man,

“and go to be promoted over the trees? Then
“said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou,
“and reign over us. And the bramble said unto
“the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over
“you, then come and put your trust in my
“shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the
“bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.
“Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sin-
“cerely in that ye have made Abimelech king,
“and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his
“house, and have done unto him according to
“the deserving of his hands; (For my father
“fought for you, and adventured his life far, and
“delivered you out of the hand of Midian; And
“ye are risen up against my father’s house this
“day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten
“persons, upon one stone; and have made Abi-
“melech, the son of his maid-servant, king over
“the men of Shechem, because he is your bro-
“ther;) If ye then have dealt truly and sin-
“cerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this
“day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him
“also rejoice in you; But if not, let fire come
“out from Abimelech, and devour the men of
“Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let
“fire come out from the men of Shechem, and
“from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.”

—In this parable every thing is produced likely to
rouse the passions, to touch the affections, and to

awaken a sense of justice—if the principle were not indeed quite extinguished. The services of his father—the humility of his family, who had rather avoided than courted the sovereignty—the meanness as well as the ambition of the man who ruled them, and whom he denominates, in contempt, “a bramble,” both because of his illegitimate birth and his cruel qualities—the ingratitude of the Shechemites, who could see this injustice done to the house of their disinterested deliverer, and neither prevent nor avenge it—all are finely portrayed: but the conclusion, in which he makes a solemn appeal to their consciences, and leaves an awful curse upon their guilt, winds up the address with inimitable grandeur. It is only necessary to advert to one expression—“wine, which cheereth both god and man.” I am astonished that its natural import should not have been more readily apprehended by commentators, and more correctly rendered by our translators. The word rendered ‘god’ is plural*; and is not exclusively applied to the Deity, but frequently employed in reference to kings and rulers. The word translated ‘man’† does not imply man simply, as capable of dominion, but man in his low and degraded state, in the inferior ranks of society. Let it be rendered, “wine, which cheereth both PRINCES

* אֱלֹהִים

† אֲנָשִׁים

and PEASANTS," the meaning is obvious, and the sentiment is just.

The second parable which deserves our notice, is that of Jehoash, king of Israel: and it demands it on two accounts. First, as it confirms the sentiment already advanced, that it was the practice among Eastern nations to express themselves metaphorically on the most important occasions, both religious and political: and secondly, as it furnishes an instance of the power of figurative language to express the passions in general—and here, defiance and *contempt*. Amaziah, the king of Judah, had smitten the Edomites; and inflated with his victory—presuming perhaps, also, that he should win back to the crown of David the revolted ten tribes—he challenged to battle Jehoash the king of Israel. His declaration of war is couched in the figurative language of the day: "Come! let us look one another in the face." The answer of the monarch of Israel is scorn and defiance. "And Jehoash the king of Israel sent " to Amaziah the king of Judah, saying, The " thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar " that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter " to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild " beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the " thistle." Every thing here is strongly marked;

the proud disproportion of their power, which he presumes—the thistle and the cedar: their natural affinity—both of Lebanon: the presumption which he imputes to Amaziah; the ease with which he deems he can crush him with his forces. It had been well for the king of Judah if he had taken the counsel so roughly administered: he persisted, in contending with the monarch of Israel, and was defeated and taken captive by him.

The third instance of Scripture Parables which occurs to illustrate the subject, is that of the woman of Tekoah; and its object and effect was *persuasion*. David had banished his beloved son, Absalom, for the assassination of his brother Amnon. After his grief was assuaged, and his anger appeased, he longed for the return of his banished child: but he had been so guilty, that it appeared an act of injustice to recall him; and the firmness of the monarch was in opposition to the feelings of the father. While his mind thus wavered, a widow woman, instructed by Joab the commander of the forces, presented herself before the king, in habiliments of mourning: and when David inquired into her calamity, “she answered*, “I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband “is dead. And thine handmaid had two sons;

* 2 Sam. xiv. 5—7.

“and they strove together in the field, and there
“was none to part them; but the one smote the
“other, and slew him. And, behold, the whole
“family is risen against thine handmaid; and they
“said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that
“we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom
“he slew; and we will destroy the heir also:
“and so they shall quench my coal which is left,
“and shall not leave to my husband name or re-
“mainder upon the earth.”—How artfully this
fable is drawn! its circumstances so remote, as
not to awaken the suspicion of the king; yet suf-
ficiently allied to assist her plea, if she should move
him to pity her imaginary distress: and the tale is
told with so much pathos, that she could scarcely
fail to excite his compassion. Accordingly, he
granted the life of her son: and she immediately
turned the argument upon him, that if he pitied
another who had offended partly in the same way,
he ought, in justice to himself, his son, and his
people, to recall his own child. Striking upon the
already vibrating chords of the king’s heart, she
carried her point, and Absalom was suffered to
return.

The fourth instance of this mode of instruction
is the matchless parable of Nathan to administer
reproof to his guilty sovereign. The reason of
thus censuring the royal offender is evident. That
the heart of David was insensible to his crime, or

hardened against it, appears from the circumstance, that during at least nine months he seems to have felt no compunction, and had expressed no penitence. In this state of mind, openly to have attacked his conduct would have irritated, but could not have melted him. The prophet has therefore recourse to a parable, the parts of which display the most correct judgment, and the most exquisite feeling. The substance of it was calculated to rouse all his passions as a man, and all his justice as a monarch; and its application, like an unexpected stroke of thunder, smote his conscience, and destroyed his security in a moment.—

“ And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And
“ he came unto him, and said unto him, There were
“ two men in one city; the one rich, and the other
“ poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks
“ and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save
“ one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and
“ nourished up; and it grew up together with him,
“ and with his children: it did eat of his own meat,
“ and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom,
“ and was unto him as a daughter. And there
“ came a traveller unto the rich man; and he spared
“ to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to
“ dress for the way-faring man that was come unto
“ him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed
“ it for the man that was come to him. And
“ David's anger was greatly kindled against the man:

“and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the
“man that hath done this thing shall surely die :
“And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because
“he did this thing, and because he had no pity.—
“And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man !”•

—It is scarcely possible to read this parable without tears. What Bathsheba was to Uriah, as the wife of his bosom, and his *only* beloved—the cruel injustice of the monarch, who had even *too many* indulgences—are most touchingly portrayed in the ewe-lamb of the poor man, his only lamb, nourished and brought up with his children, and most dearly prized,—and contrasted with the wealth, power, and oppression of the rich man, whose cruelty is represented as wanton as his measures were unjustifiable, insulting, and violent. The indignation of the king, which followed a tale that he supposed to be matter of fact, is natural and strong : his judgment is severely just, and it is confirmed by an oath. At this moment, the tremendous, the abrupt charge, “Thou art the man !” changing the monarch into the criminal, turning upon himself his anger, his justice, and his sentence, at once impresses the heart, and demonstrates, more powerfully than could a thousand arguments, the force and fitness of this mode of instruction. It opened the eyes of the royal penitent to his guilt and danger ; and the powerful emotions of his mind are exhibited in that

most affecting and beautiful psalm* which he wrote on this occasion.

The last instance which I shall produce, of this mode of conveying *instruction*, is the sublime allegory of Solomon on the indications and infirmities of old age; a matchless description in itself of the figurative kind, and produced with the most benevolent purpose of rousing the attention of the young to a sense of the duties of life, and a zealous performance of them, before it's evening shadows fall around them†.—“Remember now thy Creator
“in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come
“not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt
“say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun,
“or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not
“darkened; nor the clouds return after the rain:
“In the day when the keepers of the house shall
“tremble, and the strong men shall bow them-
“selves, and the grinders cease because they are
“few, and those that look out of the windows be
“darkened; And the doors shall be shut in the
“streets, when the sound of the grinding is low;
“and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird; and
“all the daughters of music shall be brought low:
“Also when they shall be afraid of that which is
“high, and fears shall be in the way, and the
“almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper
“shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because

* Ps. li.

† Eccles. xii. 1—7.

“man goeth to his long home, and the mourners
“go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord
“be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the
“pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel
“broken at the cistern: Then shall the dust return
“to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return
“unto God who gave it.”—What perfection is seen
in this allegory! what truth in nature! what
eloquence in description! The failing of the eyes,
which no longer receive the cheering influences of
the glorious light of day and of the heavenly bodies—
the fainting of the limbs, which can no longer act
as a support, or be employed as a guard, to the
sinking or assaulted frame—the falling-in of the
lips, compared to the closing of the doors—the
decrease of the teeth—the destruction of the voice—
the imperfection of the hearing—the whitening of
the head with grey hairs, like the almond-tree—the
fears, the burdens, of that advanced period—the
bending of the back, figured by the locust—the
spinal marrow as the silver cord—the golden bowl
containing the brain—the broken pitcher symbol-
izing the stomach unable to perform its digestive
functions—the wheel at the cistern useless, repre-
senting the heart unable longer to give an impulse
to the circulation of the blood†. Compare all this
with facts, and with the anatomy of the human
frame; and then decide how rich in allegory, how

† Scripture Illustrated.

just in description, how convincing in reasoning, are the Sacred Writings.

From what has been advanced, we infer that signs and deportment, which, according to European customs, and in our day, would fix upon any man the imputation of insanity, were well understood, and most powerfully impressive, in Eastern countries, and in the times of the Prophets. Figures of speech also, amounting to a play upon words and names, which carry to us marks of levity, were to those people, and in that age, grave and significant. What must be the conclusion? but that most of the objections which modern infidelity has urged against the Scriptures, recoil upon themselves; as they will be found to originate in a profound ignorance of ancient customs*—of existing Oriental manners—of the habits and feelings of mankind in other climes, and under other circumstances—and

* Dr. Clarke, whose Travels afford such a source of valuable information, furnishes the following testimony, in the account of his Journey through the Holy Land. "We had early resolved to use the Sacred Scriptures as our only guide throughout this interesting territory; and the delight afforded by an internal evidence of truth, in every instance where fidelity of description was ascertained by a comparison with existing documents, surpassed even all we had anticipated. Such extraordinary instances of coincidence, even with the customs of the country as they are now exhibited, and so many wonderful examples of illustration afforded by contrasting the simple narrative with the appearances presented, made us only regret the shortness of our time, and the limited sphere of our abilities for the comparison." See *Clarke's Travels*, Vol. II. Chap. 13.

in an unblushing presumption, the contemptible offspring of folly, and the boasted rival of Revelation. We leave them their triumph; we have no disposition to drink with them the intoxicating cup of arrogance and temerity: truth is our object; and we find it unmingled, unadulterated, in the inspired Volume; which, while it diffused directly, or indirectly, wisdom and piety to all nations, received innumerable tributes in return—from their customs, teachings, and even errors—to its truth and divinity.

“ All truth is from the sempiternal source

“ Of Light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,

“ Drew from the stream below. More favour’d, we

“ Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain-head.

“ To them it flow’d much mingled and defil’d

“ With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams

“ Illusive of Philosophy—so call’d,

“ But falsely. Sages after sages strove

“ In vain to filter off a crystal draught

“ Pure from the lees, which often more enhanc’d

“ The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred

“ Intoxication and delirium wild.

“ In vain they push’d inquiry to the birth

“ And spring-time of the world——

“ ——Their answers, vague,

“ And all at random, fabulous, and dark,

“ Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,

“ Defective and unsanction’d, prov’d too weak

“ To bind the roving appetite, and lead

“ Blind nature to a God not yet reveal’d.—

“ ’Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,

“ Explains all mysteries, except her own;

“ And so illuminates the path of life,

“ That fools discover it—and stray no more!”

NOTES.

I AM indebted to an ingenious friend for the following remark.—

“ Lycophron transfers the very words of the *Psalmist* (selected as a text for the preceding Lecture) to the Prophecies of *Cassandra*; and particularly so at the close of the poem, where the Guard tells Priam how his Daughter, hurrying to her cell,

“ ‘ Shew’d her dark speech, and muttered oracles.’ ”*

“ How much does this speak for the character of the Scriptures, thus to have been pirated by so elegant a classic as LYCOPHRON, at the very moment of their translation by the LXX, under the auspices of his patron, Ptolemy Philadelphus ! ”

It is also not unworthy of remark, that St. John, in the Book of Revelation, uses terms corresponding with those adopted by LYCOPHRON in many of the Parts or prophecies of his poem, which begin exactly as the grand events of the Apocalypse are ushered in ; as,

“ One woe is past—another woe succeeds ; ”—
a mode of expression, therefore, on the part of the apostle, evidently conformed to the accustomed solemn introduction of events surpassing (or supposed to surpass) human penetration. It was, as it should seem, the prophetic style of antiquity ; and thus the agreement of the Scriptures with eastern and ancient modes of expression is demonstrated.

For many of the sentiments of the second and third Lectures, I am indebted to the Abbé Pluche, in his *History of the Heavens*, and to Gale’s *Court of the Gentiles*. The latter derives the Phœnician, Egyptian, and other tongues, from the Hebrew. The former remarks, “ The Egyptian tongue, no doubt, was different from that of the country of Chanaan ; and though the ground of both languages might, perhaps, be the same, as there are several proofs it is, they possibly were not more different from each other, in their terminations or turns, than the Spanish, the French, and the Italian tongues, whose ground is the same.” He shews the derivation of Greek names from Hebrew terms, applying to Egyptian symbols, and terms of agriculture ; upon which the absurd mythology of the Romans was subsequently founded, and adopted from the Greek Poets ; of which the following are a few examples.

* See the elegant Translation of Lycophron, by the much-lamented Viscount Royston. *Cambridge*, 1806.

"**GANYMEDE**,—from גַּנִּים *Gannim, septa, the closes (inclosures), the gardens, the terraces*; and from מֶדָּד *Mad, mensura, comes* גַּנִּימָד *Gannimad, the terraces of a just measure, the terraces sufficiently high.*
 "The plain of Egypt is naturally flat and smooth. The retreats of the inhabitants are causeys raised by the art of man."—"This Horus, surnamed Ganymede, and placed by the side of Governor Osiris, has given the Greeks an occasion to imagine the story of the rape of a young hunter by the eagle of Jupiter."

"**ORPHEUS**,—from עֶרֶפ *Oreph, the back, the hinder part of the head.*
 "The same word signifies, *backward, upon one's back.* Horus was sometimes represented lying on his back, upon a lion. Husbandry, during the passing of the sun under the sign Leo, was, as it were, dead, and laid flat; and with relation to the figure, they gave him the name of *Orpheus*, which signifies *killed, or laid sprawling on the ground.*"

EURYDICE.—"The Isis, which is seen near the lion become mild and tractable, was called *Eurydice*, which signifies the *lion grown tame*, the crosses of the sign of the lion overcome. Fable has made her the wife of Orpheus." He derives Eurydice from, אֵרִי *Eri, lion*; and from דָּכָא *Daca, tamed, overcome*, comes אֵרִידָכָא *Eridaca, the lion tamed.* How could the concurrence of the names of Calliope, Orpheus, and Eurydice, with the figure of the tame lion" (of which he presented, in a plate, three monuments) "possibly not have given birth to the fable of Orpheus, son of Calliope, who tamed the lion, and married Eurydice?"

MUSEUS.—"After this long leisure, husbandry being at last delivered from the waters, seemed to rise again, and began the surveying of the lands dried up: the public sign of it had thence its name of *Moses, or Museus*, the meaning whereof is known to every one."

LINUS.—"About the end of Autumn, the inhabitants being freed from the works of the fields, manufactured, in their night-works, the line thread and cloth, which were one of their chief riches. The Horus, that was the publication of it, took thence his name of *Linus*, which signifies *watching, the sitting-up in the night*: (לֵינָא *Lyn, to watch*.) The star that lights the night" (*Luna, the Moon*) has on this account retained the same name; and so has the matter itself" (*line*) "that was manufactured during these watchings." Horus" (the symbol of the several works of the year) "thus changing

“his names and attributes, according to the operations peculiar to certain seasons and countries, visibly has given birth to the tales of *Linus, Museus, Picus* (from פִּכָּה *Pikah*, *affluere*, the swelling of the waters), *Ganymede*, and many other pretended heroes or legislators; of which it is needless, after this, to pretend to determine and fix the chronology and the abode.”

He founds upon these data a most important remark:—“We here find a much greater benefit; *viz.* that of detecting the falsity and ridicule of the beginnings of the Egyptian history; the long duration of which, the Deists affect to oppose, to the newness of the world, and the small number of generations we find in the Scripture. Not only all those gods and demi-gods, which the Egyptians pretend to have reigned through a most remote antiquity, are absurd notions, proceeding from the abuse of their hieroglyphics; but even their first kings, that is, those which are uniformly found at the head of all their dynasties, are visibly the chief keys of their ancient writing, mistaken for historical monuments.”—He proceeds to elucidate his point in the example of *Menes*;—from מֶנֶס *Mana*, *numerare, ordinare: the Calendar, the Rule of the people, the Legislator*: personifying this title also, they represented *Menes* as “their legislator, the author of their polity, the orderer of their year, and the founder of their laws.”

Passing from Egypt to other countries, in the same train of deduction, he says, “The god, or rather the figure of the sun, which the Egyptians called *Osiris*, or the governor of the earth,” (“the inspector, the coachman, or the leader, the king, the guide, the moderator of the stars, the soul of the world, the governor of nature—” *Plutarch. De Iside et Osiride*; & *Macrob. in Somn. Scip. lib. i.* from אוֹחֹסִי אֶרֶץ *Ochosi erets*, or *Ocsi eres, dominium terra*—”) “assumed another name in other places. The Eastern nations who had adopted him, and who looked on their temporal advantages as the effect of this devotion, called him *Moloch*, *Melcham*, that is, the King מֶלֶךְ *Malac*, or *Melec*,” &c. Thus, also, he deduces the Grecian gods from Egyptian symbols, and Hebrew titles; and, among other curious and learned remarks, derives *Atlas* and his fable from תֵּלַח *Telah*, *suspendere*, Job xxvi. אֲתֵלַח *Atlah*, *support, prop.* Στήλη, *Stele, column.*”

See LE PLUCHE's *History of the Heavens*, vol. I.

Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, were names which, it was said in the Lecture, might be traced to a Hebrew origin. The writer already quoted, the Abbé Le Pluche, thus demonstrates it.

Jove, or Jupiter, is evidently from יְהוָה : and the name, under all it's forms, may be traced to the root of this word, signifying *essential life*.

NEPTUNE,—from נוֹף *Nouph*, *agitare*, which forms נֶפֶחַ *Nephah*, or נֶפֶחַת *Nepheth*, *agitatio*, *appulsio*; and from אֲנִי *Oni*, *navis*, *classis*, comes נֶפְתָּאֲנִי *Neptoni*, *classis appulsio*, *the arrival of the fleet*.

PLUTO,—from פִּלֵּט *Palat*, *liberare*, and פִּלְוֹטָה *Peloutah*, and פִּלְוֹטָא *Pelouto*, *liberatio*, *the deliverance*.

The circumstances which gave birth to these names, as referring to different Egyptian symbols, indicating different events, national or commercial, are ably stated and vindicated by Le Pluche.

LECTURE IV.

ON THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF OUR LORD'S PARABLES.

MATT. XIII. 10.

Why speakest thou unto them in Parables?

THAT there was something peculiarly striking in our Lord's method of teaching, may be inferred from the surprise which it excited, and the effect which it produced. On one occasion, when the magistrates of the Jews sent their officers to apprehend him, these rough men, severe by nature, and hardened against pity by their manner of life, returned, unable to effect the cruel purpose for which they were commissioned, softened into tenderness, warmed into admiration, divested of their accustomed ferocity, and, careless of the indignation of their employers, confessed, "Never man spake like this man!"—It was fabled of Orpheus, who was himself, perhaps, a fictitious person, that he moved trees from their rooted stations, and drew around him beasts of prey, disarming them of their savage propensities, so

irresistible was his melody. But in regard to the teaching of our Lord, it is no fable, that he tamed the wildest passions, controuled the most inveterate habits, transformed the most abandoned characters, and melted into contrition the most hardened offenders. The fiction relates to the passions which it represents allegorically: the fact in connection with the ministry of Jesus demonstrates such an effect to be no longer even problematical. We have read and heard of the astonishing influence of eloquence on the human mind, at every period of time, and in every rank of society. Demosthenes ruled the Athenians by the fervour and energy of his addresses, in the most perilous circumstances; and guided at pleasure the wayward passions of a jealous democracy. His language had power to keep the armies of Philip in check, and subordinate to his wishes the clashing opinions of his countrymen, for no inconsiderable period. His persuasion invested him with power—he long held the helm of the vessel of the state, and piloted her through many a dangerous sea, in many a tremendous tempest. His eloquence had this character; it did not merely charm—it prevailed; it sent away the audience, not admiring the speaker, but inflamed against the enemies of the state; and on one occasion deprived them of the patience necessary to hear him to the end, when all the people declared with one voice that they would oppose the oppressor of their liberties, and

rushed from the assembly at once to make good their resolution. Yet this powerful oratory was not disinterested; nor was the speaker, who could thus captivate others, himself out of the reach of bribery: and when once the principles are discovered to be false, the most finished and energetic appeals lose their force; and the addresses of Demosthenes did so in respect of the Athenians.—Cicero long governed the Senate of Rome, by his genius and his eloquence. These found honourable employment, and abundant success, in defending the property and lives of his fellow citizens, and protracting the date of his country's liberties. They have survived to this hour. Many centuries the orator has rested in his grave, indifferent to human applause, out of the reach of human censure, free from toils of state, and unaffected by the passion of ambition;—but his writings remain, and convey, even to this remote period of time, some of the fire of their author to the bosom of his readers; awakening a powerful interest in transactions long since passed away—in an empire buried under the wrecks of nations.—Amidst all the fascinations of these masters of the human mind, who seem to have possessed a key by which at all times they could gain access to the bosom, and draw forth its most sacred feelings, there is something artificial. They are produced as evidences of the power of language upon the heart: they are not intended

as a comparison with the preaching of Jesus—they are brought forth as a foil to his instructions: they shew us how far human agency can go; and they will thus serve, in the event, to confirm the judgment of those, whose sentiment introduced these remarks, in rendering indisputable the infinite superiority of the “Author and Finisher of our faith.”

In confirmation of the judgment repeatedly passed upon the matchless character of our Lord's teaching, the Evangelists have sometimes detailed it's features according to their apprehension; and remarked, “He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” This authority could not intend severity of manner; for this would have been to teach “*as the scribes,*” who laid much stress upon the weight and dignity of their office, and manifested but little condescension “to men of low estate.” How harshly, how arrogantly, they censured the followers of Jesus! “This people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed.”—How swift to judge! how slow to reclaim! how destitute of holy sympathy! even had their accusation been well founded. Not with such authority did Jesus teach: his authority was power, impression, effect—arising from the sublimity of the truths which he preached, the wisdom with which he unfolded them, and the clearness with which he applied them. Conviction followed his words, for demonstration accompanied

them: they were spirit, they were life. He could appeal to the rulers, as well as to the multitude, and say, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." His instructions had weight, both from the importance of their matter, and the earnest, affectionate, energetic manner, in which they were addressed to a perishing and long-neglected people. The negative, He taught them "not as the scribes," leaves us much to supply. He reversed all the haughty, censorious, obscure, and careless habits of that degenerate class of teachers. His *condescension* was manifest, in addressing the multitude, whom they treated with contempt, and left to be destroyed by vice and ignorance. He sympathized in their privations, shared their poverty, elevated their hopes, imparted to them knowledge, and soothed their afflictions. He listened to their inquiries, resolved their doubts, bore with their infirmities, and was unwearied in his communications. He spake a language which they understood, and chose subjects which they felt; thus leading them from one degree of knowledge to another. He did not disdain to walk with them, to eat with them; to enforce his public instructions by permitting private audiences. His *gentleness* was apparent in all his addresses. He did not scatter curses with a lavish and indiscriminate hand; but, although all judgment was committed to him, chose rather to exercise his delightful commission—to seek and

to save that which was lost. Yes; and he felt it to be a delightful commission, although its execution entailed upon him numberless privations and persecutions, and an ignominious death. The Shepherd of Israel gathered the lambs with his arm, and carried them in his bosom: he collected that flock which his servants had scattered, and the unfaithful pastors devoured. He entreated, persuaded, wept—quenching the lightning of his eyes in tears of love; and silencing the thunders of heaven, that the whispers of mercy might be heard. The hypocrites and the self-righteous alone were the objects of his holy indignation; upon them he turned the power of his eloquence and the terrors of his frown;—but he looked invitation to the poor, convinced, despairing sinner, while he said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden! and I will give you rest.” The *luminous* character of his teaching stood opposed to the heavy literature or the unintelligible exposition of the scribes. How could they, who did not themselves understand the law, who could not discern the Messiah in it, unfold its mysteries, or apply its revelations? Referring its leading features to an idol of their own imagination, while the great original stood before them, they must have been teachers no less obscure than unsafe. A temple from which the very types were fast vanishing away, and from which the Saviour to whom

they related was expelled, could have but few attractions ; and the multitudes flocked to the side of the mountain, or the borders of the lake, to hear that exposition of the law, and to receive that simple, impressive, convincing information, which they looked for in vain, from the appointed teachers, and in that once-distinguished house of prayer, from which the glory was departed. The *earnestness* and energy of our LORD's teaching must have formed a strong contrast to the supineness and indifference of the scribes. Seeking only their own emolument and distinction, they were careless of the interests of the imperishable spirit. Their own prophets had so severely arraigned such teachers, that they read their own condemnation in the synagogue every sabbath-day ; and if they were so blind as not to perceive, or so hardened as not to regard it, it is not to be imagined that those who smarted under their authority, and perished through their neglect, could be equally blind, or equally indifferent. Where could they look for a faithful shepherd, when the whole priesthood was alike corrupt ? Behold ! a new Teacher arises—indifferent to circumstances—careful only of principles. He can teach in any place, and at any time : He is found labouring, in season and out of season : He preaches from a boat, on the side of a hill, in the desert, by the way-side—he consecrates every spot by his doctrines and prayers. And, oh ! how

eloquently he pleads the cause of man with himself! how fervently he argues against prejudice! how divinely he pities and forgives! how clearly he describes human ruin and redemption! This, so attractive in itself, became irresistible when contrasted with the pride and indifference of their teachers. No wonder the common people heard him "gladly." Being crafty, then, did he catch them with guile? O, no! disdaining all art, influenced alone by love to man, he was justifying his name, JESUS; he was accomplishing his work as a Saviour; he was winning the souls which he was about to purchase with his own blood.

Such were some of the characters of our Lord's general teaching; and they shame our levity, they censure our indolence, they reprove our carelessness, as those to whom he has deigned to commit the word of this salvation. Lives there the minister, who does not feel the burning blushes of shame and indignation against himself rise to his cheek, while he contemplates the work and character of his Lord?—O for the mind of Christ, to rest upon those who enter into the labours of his love, and the ministry once committed to the diligent and faithful hands of his apostles!

We turn from this general view of our Lord's teaching, to a particular branch of it, which will not, we trust, be the less understood for these

preliminary remarks. The Lecture of this evening is to be, on

THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF OUR LORD'S PARABLES :

and it may be necessary to examine them, in respect of their object, their character, and their effect, in order to perceive their agreement with, and their superiority to, this general mode of teaching.

I.—THE OBJECT OF OUR LORD'S PARABLES

will present to us a correspondence with the design of Parables in general, together with a purpose peculiar to some of his own.

In this mode of teaching he evidently intended to *instruct* ; and he accomplished his noble object. He seems never to have sought images for the sake of ornament. Figures have been employed by rhetoricians to decorate their addresses—to captivate the judgment by seducing the fancy. This will account for the artificial arrangements of ancient and modern orators. If the object is to please, the purpose is answered by such compositions ; if to instruct, then should we seek to please no further than will conduce to this end. “ The preacher sought out acceptable words,” said the wise monarch of Israel : and truth does not necessarily suppose, far less require, rude, unpolished, slovenly appeals. Religion does not disdain ornament, when it is simple, natural, and arises out of the subject. But to seek for foreign

decoration, to dress out mean or impoverished thoughts with pomp of language, to sacrifice the subject to the orator, to labour to please rather than to inform, is as contemptible and frivolous in itself, as it is unlike the practice and example of our Divine Master, and unbecoming the sacred office of a teacher of his most holy religion. Whatever of an ornamental character we discover in his preaching, arises from the justness and sublimity of his thoughts—the beauty of their arrangement—the natural simplicity of their illustrations—the ardent and affectionate spirit which breathes and lives in every sentiment, and in every expression. But amidst the numberless and matchless images which he employed, it is evident that his design was not to ornament his sermons, but to instruct his hearers.

He sometimes employed Parables for the purpose of *reproof*; and actuated by the same motives as those which influenced Nathan, when he chose this method of reprehending the king of Israel. The pride, the self-righteous spirit, the obstinate character of the chief-priests and Pharisees by whom he was surrounded, when joined with their personal animosity to him, rendered it necessary to conceal the truths which he intended to convey, until they could not be repelled, however they might be resented. Accordingly, we find it sometimes said, that not until the close of his address, when they

had heard all his appeal, and could not dislodge from their bosoms the convictions which had gained unexpected entrance there, did they perceive that he spake the "parable against themselves." Their attention was awakened in the first instance; and their consciences alarmed in the conclusion. They often went away exasperated beyond measure; but they were also "heavy and sad." He thus held in subjection, passions which, if roused in the beginning, could not have been appeased, and would not have suffered them to listen to his instructions, until the conclusion of his awful addresses, and until his purpose was fully answered, and all the effect which he intended was produced. He thus appeared to retreat, to strike the stronger blow. The arrow which seemed sped at a venture, when they felt it rankling in their bosom, they knew to have been aimed there: they might writhe under it's anguish, but they could not pluck it from it's station. The condemnation was severe, as it became, in such instances, self-applied. It may be possible to force conviction upon the human mind; and so to arraign it, that, when the sentence is passed, reason and justice compel the culprit to bow before it: but, then, the indignation against the instrument of the condemnation divides at least half the mind with the feelings of shame and remorse. Here, the emotions of anger may mingle with the

pangs of guilt ; but even rage must consume the spirit which nourishes it, because the arraignment is by a parable ; and both the application and the judgment is made by the conscience of the individual condemned.

To secure his *personal safety*, became a reason for this mode of teaching adopted by our Lord. Not that he feared death ; for he came into the world to die, and to “ give his life a ransom for many.” But he had a work to accomplish, before his sacrifice was made : his hour was not then come. God, whose purposes always regard some important object, invariably connects the means with the end. Jesus more than once exerted his miraculous power, to deliver himself from the rage of his enemies, through the midst of whom he passed unseen. But when he had finished the work which his Father gave him to do, he resigned the power of saving himself, and stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, where his sufferings were to be accomplished. While the designs were carrying on, and the work incomplete, he sought self-preservation by corresponding means ; and among the most obvious of these, was the wise and necessary plan of conveying important but offensive truths, in all their force, by a method which less exasperated the passions, than the blunt and open declaration of them would have done. Tenderness to the persons concerned required this ; for the

knowledge of these things was essential to their eternal peace, and they were resolutely bent upon the rejection of them; and regard to his own work, that it might neither be interrupted nor cut short, at once pointed out and sanctioned the method of teaching by Parables. Those who, after three years and a half of his ministry, and in the prime of his life, dipped their hands in his blood, would have done it at the commencement of his career, could they have found, or forged, a pretext for so doing: but while they perceived the drift of his parables with inexpressible rage, they feared the people, and they did not dare discover how deeply they were galled; because to have shewn this, must have amounted to a confession of their guilt, when the application of the circumstances which he supposed could only have been made by their consciences.

An important question arises here, relative to teaching, founded upon the example of our Lord: How far it justifies the concealment, and should regulate the dispensation of religious truth? As to concealment, the point is at once settled, by the recollection that Jesus did not hide any important truth from his hearers; but only veiled them for a season, and in his manner of communicating them, until they were able to bear them. Acting upon his illustrious model, and influenced by his spirit, one of the most distinguished of his apostles

made his appeal to the elders of the Ephesian church, in the awful moment of his final separation from them:—"Ye know that I kept back nothing that is profitable." In vain shall the timid, the flatterer, and the unfaithful, attempt to shelter themselves here. With Christ, and with primitive christians, personal considerations had no weight, but as they were subservient to the great work which they had to accomplish. In their preaching, no craft, no duplicity, no unfaithfulness, is discoverable: in the principles of the christian religion none can be tolerated: These are it's terms:—"Whoso loveth father or mother, wife or daughter, house or lands, or his own life, more than me, is not worthy of me."—"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to cast both body and soul into hell." With such principles, such sentiments, such feelings, duplicity and cowardice are incompatible. These never appeared in any part of the preaching, or of the deportment, of Christ, or his apostles. They were bold to affirm the truth, and ready to die for it. They sealed their mission with their blood. They left behind them a renown, which the hero can as little acquire, as he will emulate their achievements. We read down the list of these illustrious martyrs; admire their fortitude; and write upon their sepulchres, "Of whom the world was not worthy."

While no considerations of a personal character can justify us in concealing or withholding the truth, from this method of our Lord's teaching we may learn a lesson of wisdom, as to the dispensation of the gospel among men. Some deny that it is preached, unless a direct and violent attack is made upon the prejudices of those who come to hear, at the same time that they have not received it. Every thing short of an absolute assault upon all their opinions, and habits, and feelings, is, with these zealots, a connivance in evil, a participation of other men's sins, an abandonment of truth, a cowardly renunciation of Evangelical principles. With them the garrison must never capitulate, but the fortress invariably be stormed. With them, zeal is the exclusive evidence of religion; and gentleness, knowledge, forbearance, dismissed from the list of christian graces. We have not so learned Christ, either from the spirit of his gospel, or the manner of his teaching. The one recommends a zeal according to knowledge; the other marked out a mode of treatment of the passions and prejudices of mankind, which would infallibly be called, on the part of these modern censors, by the odious epithet of *trimming*: not that any concession was really made to the vices or errors of the day, but that human infirmity was regarded with tenderness, it's errors corrected by wisdom, it's evils counteracted by gentleness, it's prejudices met with persuasion,

and the most important truths preached in the least offensive way. Set persecution, set death, in array against these noble champions of christianity; and they said—one and all of them said, “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Was this cowardice? Yet these were the men who sought by all the means of persuasion, in the exercise of wisdom and prudence, to save some; who did not alarm human prejudices, but led them to the foot of the cross, where they dropped off of themselves: and He who hung upon it, for us men, and for our salvation, himself taught by Parables, that he might take possession of the heart, without exasperating the passions.

In the object of our Lord's Parables, however, we must not fail to point out one grand peculiarity; and that was, *to punish*. It was not merely such a concealment as hid the truth only until it found entrance into the heart; but a taking away of the key of knowledge, as a condemnation of the supineness and hardness of heart of those who had neglected or despised the counsel of God against themselves. This object stands so prominent in the preaching of Christ, that it constitutes the only reason which he gave to the inquiry of his disciples—

* Acts xx: 24.

“Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He
 “answered and said unto them, Because it is given
 “unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom
 “of heaven, but to them it is not given. For
 “whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he
 “shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath
 “not, from him shall be taken away even that he
 “hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables:
 “because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they
 “hear not; neither do they understand. And in
 “them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which
 “saith, By hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not
 “understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and shall
 “not perceive: for this people’s heart is waxed
 “gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their
 “eyes have they closed; lest at any time they
 “should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,
 “and understand with their heart, and should be
 “converted, and I should heal them.*” Such a line
 of conduct was justly adopted in respect of those who
 had long provoked the Divine forbearance, and wil-
 fully shut their ears and their hearts against the plainest
 indications of the Divine will, and the most powerful
 pleadings of infinite mercy. They were also about
 to fill up the measure of their iniquity, by the
 murder of the Son of God himself. This is evi-
 dently an act of the Redeemer as a Judge; and is so

* Matt. xiii. 10—15.

represented by himself, when, on another occasion, but with the same intention, relative to the same characters, he said, "For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind†." It is but the ratification of their own choice; it is the dreadful but righteous retribution upon their inveterate obstinacy, and unrepented crimes. It is less the business of the present discussion to vindicate the principle advanced, than to establish the position, that the end of our Lord's teaching by Parables, in respect of those who had rejected the Prophets, and who were persecuting him even to death, was to confirm them, or at least to leave them, in their judicial blindness. The same veil remains upon their hearts when the scriptures are read, until this day; and to this infatuated people he speaks still in Parables. Those who seek simply illustration in this method, will be disappointed: the design of Christ was so obviously to conceal, that he explained in private to his disciples what he had thus folded up in public. As to its justice—Is it not just to remove that which is willfully neglected? Is it not just to conceal that which was spurned when it was known? The Spirit of God shall not always strive with men: and if this judgment of Jesus, manifested in the manner of his teaching, be not defensible, then we must blot

† John ix. 39.

out retribution from the moral government of the world, and leave the righteous laws of God without adequate sanctions.

From the object, we pass to the consideration of

II.—THE CHARACTER OF THE PARABLES OF CHRIST.

Although this must have been partially anticipated, as inseparable from their object, yet it is necessary to devote a little time to this particular point: and it will appear in this, as in the former instance, that the Parables of our Lord have a character in common with those of other teachers, and one peculiar to themselves.

They are *beautiful*—transcendently beautiful! They adorn, without seeking to do it, every point of doctrine, and every moral precept. “Grace was poured upon his lips,” and flowed through all his instructions. Some specimens of the pathetic, and of the sublime, were produced in the last Lecture; but these are surpassed in those parables which remain to be examined, as we pass over the preaching of Christ.

Their *simplicity* astonishes, while it informs. They are great without effort; and captivate by approving themselves to every man’s conscience. The magnificent productions of genius may excite our admiration; but here a master’s hand is manifested, by giving dignity to things which would by another be overlooked or despised; and in

making the plainest feature of Nature, or the most ordinary occurrence, an occasion for unfolding the most important truths, and the means of illustrating and enforcing them.

A character of infinite importance is attached to these Parables. Others were directed to a particular purpose, and answered a given end: they secured their object; and in so doing, resigned their agency. To censure an ungrateful people, to trample pride under foot in some individual instance, to awaken the feelings of a parent, to reprove an offending sovereign—these were grand designs, and were effected by their corresponding parables; but those of Jesus always interest, because they aimed not at one thing, but at every thing interesting to man. What sublime doctrines were conveyed by them! They elucidated the great scheme of human redemption; they placed in various points of view, the principle upon which it proceeds, the reception which it met in the world, the difficulties it had to encounter, the triumph it would finally secure, and the punishment which must follow its rejection. They unlocked the mysteries of the Kingdom, even the deep things of God. Death, judgment, hell, and heaven, were shadowed forth, under familiar, but striking images. The precepts of religion were enforced, by shewing the operation of different principles on the human character in a figure; thus embodying that which

in a mere didactic shape, might have effected less, or have been wholly disregarded.

The peculiar character of these Parables was their *variety* and *extent*. They put in requisition the whole course of nature: nothing was overlooked, nothing neglected. It was said of Solomon, that he spake of plants, "from the hyssop that "groweth upon the wall" (probably a kind of moss, for the hyssop does *not* grow upon the wall) "to "the cedar of Lebanon." This was his praise as a naturalist. But of Jesus, as a teacher, we may say, He left nothing in nature untouched, from the grain of corn falling into the ground, and dying in order to multiply (which he made the symbol of his own death), to the glorious orb of day, which he exhibited as the faint representative of himself, when he said, "I am the light of the world:" and in all this illimitable range of illustration, he elucidated spiritual and eternal things. Not simply by narratives framed in the imagination, and brought to bear upon a moral subject, but by analogies to be traced between surrounding objects and invisible things, he made plain the principles advanced and enforced in his sermons; thus blending types and parables—appealing to the judgment, through the senses and the fancy—carrying this figurative mode of teaching to a greater extent and perfection than it had ever reached before—and divesting it of every thing evil, rendering it subservient exclusively

to good, "opened men's ears, and sealed their instruction."

In looking to

III.—THE EFFECT OF OUR LORD'S PARABLES,

we are prepared to meet with some further evidences of their peculiar character.

They had a more *extensive influence*, at the moment, than any teaching of a similar kind ever possessed. As they had a greater range, the means of elucidation were more multiplied. As they were simple in their nature, they were more easily apprehended. As they related to daily objects, to domestic labours, to common occurrences, to the scenery by which his hearers were surrounded, to circumstances in which they were themselves deeply interested—the faculty of the imagination, in union with that of the judgment, was constantly exercised. If the combinations had been remote, or perplexed, the effect would have been less when they were first exhibited, and must afterwards have perished altogether. Retention seems to be a great object in connection with Parables; not only that the thing signified may be clearly understood, but long remembered. This end was most admirably secured by our Lord's Parables, as they borrowed familiar imagery, and appealed to the general course of nature.

They had an *universality of application*, unrivalled in any similar mode of teaching. Every vice

engendered in the human heart was exposed, every grace drawn forth into action, and placed in the most advantageous point of view. This was not done by a confusion of sentiment, or of imagery, but by a wonderful variety of subjects and figures. Every parable has some one leading sentiment; and to this we must look, clearly to understand it. Something is conceded to the image employed, to preserve it's integrity; but the doctrine, or precept, is one; and those who strive to build a system upon a parable, introduce confusion into that which came most distinctly defined from the hand of our Lord. This has been an error in the discussion of parables; they have been too much dissected—too much bowed to system; too many things have been supposed couched under them; and the perplexity of the sermon has destroyed the simplicity of the text. While the object of each parable is undivided, every important principle is illustrated, every vicious passion is exposed in it's turn. The self-righteous, the indifferent, the prayerless, the miser, are all exhibited in succession. On the other hand, the sinner was invited, the fearful encouraged, the weak strengthened, the mourner comforted. Every one had his portion in his season, and none were sent empty away. All were reprov'd, convinc'd, or consol'd, as they severally needed his gracious assistance. His delineations of character held "the mirror up to Nature; to shew Virtue her own

“feature; Scorn her own image; and the very age and body of the Time, his form and pressure.” Nor to that age alone were the effects of this sublime teaching confined;—it has an *imperishable ascendancy* upon the heart of man. The Parables of our Lord must live to the end of time, and they lose none of their force by it's influence. They still continue to instruct, to reprove, to console, to speak to the judgment and to the conscience. They still arraign guilt, redress misery, and unfold the claims of immortality. They have so pressed nature into the service of religion, that it is impossible to walk abroad without connecting the natural with the spiritual world. He that goes into the corn-field, shall see, in the sowing of the seed, and the hopes of the husbandman, his own present duties and anxieties;—in the dying of the grain in order to reproduce, the need of his own mortality, and the triumphant issue of his faith;—in the growth of the corn, his own advancement in religion;—in the weeds which choke it, the mixed state of society;—in the ripening of the ear, the preparation of the nations for the reception of the gospel;—in the harvest, the end of the world;—and in the gathering home the shocks of corn fully ripe, his own eternal rest. If one part of Nature is so instructive—if one little plant can be made to teach so many and such important truths—what advantage must it not be to follow our Lord through the whole range of

creation, which he subordinated to spiritual information. While his Parables had one awful and peculiar intention, relative to one class of ungodly men, as a punishment of unbelief—as to their general objects they were most benevolent; and whatever was most useful in the design, most beautiful in the character, most impressive in the effect, of this mode of instruction in general, was in his Parables incomparably more important, more admirable, more lastingly, because eternally, influential. The elucidation of these principles will, of course, fall under the succeeding Lectures, all of which are specimens of his delineations of character and circumstances; but from this faint and general outline, enough appears to compel us to exclaim, “Who teacheth like him!”

LECTURE V.

THE SOWER.

MATT. XIII. 18.

Hear ye, therefore, the Parable of the Sower.

THE principles which have been advanced in the preliminary Lectures, are now to receive illustration from the most perfect specimens of parabolic instruction ever presented to the world: and if the elucidation of them be not most perspicuous, the deficiency must be imputed to the unskilfulness of the expositor, but cannot be alleged against the ample materials furnished in the preaching of Jesus Christ. Whatever might have been the effect of these parables on the minds of those who had resigned themselves to judicial blindness by the habitual indulgence of unbelief, their general tendency was most gracious; and when accompanied by our Lord's own explanation of the imagery employed, must have been most impressive and efficacious. Some minds are incapable of abstract reasoning: and such were probably the major part of his hearers, and even the disciples themselves,

from the narrowness of their education, and their corresponding habits and associations. These could never have apprehended the sublime truths which he produced, had they not been embodied and presented to the senses by a comparison stated between them and things visible. Thus religion becomes accessible, in all its abstruse and divine principles, to the meanest understanding; and those who could not follow the steps which would lead to a moral demonstration, easily comprehend a truth illustrated by surrounding objects, or by a process of nature with which they are conversant. Appeals to the judgment over which they would have slumbered, rouse them when they are addressed to the imagination, in all the vivid colouring of the material creation. In consistence with the benevolent purpose of rousing the indolent and instructing the ignorant, and to familiarize the minds of the poor and uneducated with religious subjects, Jesus has inscribed them upon the most obvious features of rural scenery, and placed them constantly before their eyes, in some well-known, simple, and endearing form, at home and abroad. He begins his Parables by an appeal to the process of nature with which they were most conversant—vegetation. Not that less of mystery attaches to this process than to the general constitution and course of nature; but that the developement of those principles which are in themselves unsearch-

able, is more within the reach of the multitude than the higher parts of the creation, because it falls daily, almost hourly, under their observation.—Philosophy, aiming at the loftiest range of things visible, sprang from the ground, spurned her birth-place, soared out of the reach of ordinary capacities, and left the poor, gazing below, in barren astonishment.—Christianity, descending from her native heavens, stooped her seraph wings as low as the earth, and, alighting upon this inferior sphere, gathered the field-flower, or pointed to the blade of wheat, as furnishing instruction on the most interesting subjects, upon a level with the understanding of those who crowded around her, and who stood most in need of information.—Which is the benefactor of man? the researches of human reason, which, terminating in speculation, left him as guilty and as miserable as they found him? or the discoveries of revelation, which, condescending to his capacity, drew spiritual wisdom from the stores of nature, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel?

Is Christ the abler teacher, or the Schools?

Already some of the most eminent men to be found on the roll of time, have decided for themselves, and laid their acquirements at his feet.—You are this night required to decide upon your own account, and upon examples of his instructions about to pass before you.

It may be proper to observe, that minor similitudes, borrowed from vegetation, or from familiar circumstances, and referring to truths not less important than those contained in the parable which is the immediate subject of inquiry, are contained in this chapter: and as the object of these Lectures is to embrace as many parables of our Lord as can be comprised in consistence with a plan of selection, it will be better to notice them here, as introductory to the principal design of this discourse.

The effect which the hidden, but operating principle of divine grace has upon the character, is represented by a little *leaven* "which a woman took, "and hid in three measures of meal, until the "whole was leavened." The secret power of religion felt in the heart, is in itself indiscernible; but how speedily and completely does it discover it's divine origin, and it's irresistible influence, in that conformity to the law of God which it superinduces in the lives of those who were once "dead in trespasses and sins!" Nor can there exist religious principle, when it's influence is not thus diffused over all the faculties of the soul, to elevate it's thoughts, to restrain it's passions, to stimulate it's powers, to inspire it's affections, to sanctify it's will, to regulate the life. A change is sometimes wrought, by which old habits are completely renounced, and even the natural temper is transformed: those who are ignorant of the power of

religion regard it with astonishment; but the christian discerns in it the certain effect of a divine principle which subdues all things to itself. Even upon the mass of mankind, religion has a general influence: in those who have not received it, it produces some effect. The example of christians acts upon depraved men, in defiance of themselves. The spirit of christianity, where it is professed, insensibly infuses itself into the laws and manners of the country: and while some, feeling its power, are benevolent and generous from principle, others are wrought upon by example, and approve the things which are excellent, without reflection, unknowing from what source they derive habits foreign to their natural temper, or what impulse they involuntarily obey. It is this general action of religion that distinguishes our native land, and gives her the pre-eminence among the nations. Her humanity, so celebrated—her generosity, even to enemies—her liberality in her distributions—her honour in her treaties—the high moral tone of her politics, are emanations from a nobler principle, which, if it had but an influence as personal as it has general, would terminate the calamities of mankind, and banish the curse from creation. But thousands are contributing to those charities which constitute the ornament of our country, and those godlike societies which aim at diffusing useful and religious knowledge over the whole earth, without

understanding their own motives, and without precisely ascertaining their own sentiments. Too indolent to inquire after truth, they yield unresisting to the general feeling. This leaven is working in the nation, and even influencing those who are unconsciously discovering its operation. But when indeed the kingdom of God shall come with power, then a nation shall be born as in a day, and all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

The value of the gospel, and its accessibility, is further compared to "*treasure* hid in a field, the " which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for " joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and " buyeth that field." Of a similar import is the comparison of the same subject " unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he " had found one *pearl* of great price, went and " sold all that he had, and bought it." In both cases, the infinite *value* of the Gospel is intimated, by the treasure, and by the pearl: and this was the more necessary, because the simple image under which the Saviour had before represented it might give some careless spirits occasion to think meanly of it. In both cases, it is something *found*; nothing which the world possessed originally, or derived from itself. It supposes that the good is diligently *sought*: for if the treasure in the field was accidentally discovered, it was the

business of the merchantman to aim at the prize which he eventually obtained. Possibly the reduplication of the same image is intended to illustrate the different ways in which religious truth takes possession of the heart—surprising some unsought, and recompensing the diligence of others. In both cases, the blessing is highly *prized*: by whatsoever means the Saviour took possession of the heart, he is considered above all price, when the power of his religion is felt there. In both cases a *sacrifice* was made to obtain it; they “sold all that they had to secure it,” and deemed themselves more than recompensed in its possession. The apostles did this, when they left all and followed him. Martyrs did this, when they sealed their testimony to the truth with their blood. Our ancestors did this, when they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. And shall not we consider all things as loss, that we may win Christ, and be found in him? Shall we not be ready to take up our cross? Shall we not feel, even in the most prosperous moments of our lives, and when the heart appears to repose most serenely upon the world, that we hold nothing in competition with Him, and with His cause? Shall we not say, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee?”

The general invitation of the gospel,—the mul-

titudes who flock to hear it, but who are unchanged by it's power, and uninfluenced by it's spirit—and the final rejection of such unworthy professors,—are all intimated in the parable. “The kingdom of heaven,” which generally signifies the gospel dispensation, “is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind ; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.” It should be remembered, that this parable was spoken from a ship, to a multitude gathered upon the sea-shore to hear him ; the business of many of them being on that element from which he drew his illustration, among whom were most of his disciples. Such an inference from their daily occupation must have struck them most forcibly. The application he made himself before he dismissed them. “So shall it be at the end of the world : the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” As this awful separation forms the subject of one of the greater parables which must this evening be produced, the remarks which occur respecting it shall be reserved until the close of the Lecture.

The unpromising beginning, and triumphant issue of the gospel, is compared to “a grain of

“mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

The mustard-plant of our country by no means answers this description; but there is a species in the East which precisely corresponds with the representation of our Lord. It has received it's classification by naturalists*; and specimens of it are to be found in the cabinets of the curious†. The branches of it are real wood, quite sufficient to afford ample shelter to birds. Some‡ accounts of an extravagant kind have been given of it's magnitude; but we have evidence of the correctness of the statement made in the parable. What an impressive representation was this of the early state of christianity, as contrasted with what we have seen of it's progress, and what we anticipate in it's confirmation. The doctrines which Jesus preached opposed the prejudices of the Jewish nation; contended against “spiritual wickedness in high places”—against the indulgences, and pursuits, and sentiments of the highest orders of society; and aimed at supplanting the philo-

* Called by Linnæus, *Sinapi Erucoides*.

† Sir J. Banks has a specimen.

‡ In the *Talmud of Jerusalem*, &c. by Rabbi Simeon. See *Scripture illustrated* by the Editor of Calmet.

sophy of the day by its own pure and simple principles; and to overthrow the idolatrous rites of all nations. It designed nothing less than to revolutionize the opinions and habits of mankind. To accomplish this, a few obscure, unlearned men, without wealth, without influence, without name, went forth, with their lives in their hand, subject to persecution, regarded with contempt, to preach the gospel. Here the grain of mustard-seed was sown. After a few years, in defiance of the authority of princes, and the sophistry of the learned, it had made considerable progress. In less than a century it had reached the major part of the countries of Europe. And now it embraces the whole of that continent; and is stretching forth its branches to all lands, inviting the nations to repose under its shadow. This is but the day of small things. Prophecy invites us to enlarge our conceptions; and give way to our imagination, in looking forward to the issue. And incalculable as the influence which it shall possess may appear, it may be well accredited after that which it has actually obtained. In the visions of the Almighty, future times are rendered present: we behold Jerusalem rebuilt, and all nations flocking to her glory—the glory of Messiah her Prince.

“Praise is in all her gates: upon her walls;

“And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,

“Is

“ Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there
“ Kneels with the native of the farthest West,
“ And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand,
“ And worships. Her report has travell’d forth
“ Into all lands. From every clime they come,
“ To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
“ O Sion !—an assembly such as earth
“ Saw never, such as heaven stoops down to see !”

The purposes for which he taught them by this variety of parables, he explains at the close, under another figure : “ Therefore every *scribe*, which is
“ instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto
“ a man that is an *householder*, which bringeth forth
“ out of his treasure things new and old.” By comparing them to a scribe, he taught them, by an office well known to them, that they were set for the defence of the gospel, and to unravel it’s mysteries. To commend their attention, approval, and comprehension of the truths which he taught, he praised them as qualified for this arduous duty, while he pointed out it’s vast extent. It was necessary for them to have a distinct apprehension themselves of the truths which they intended to dispense to others ; and in filling up their office, they would find all the furniture they could lay up by hearing, reading, and observation, and all their stores of wisdom and knowledge, put into requisition.

Having glanced at these similitudes, which bear upon the leading subject of this Lecture, and

which will aid us in the elucidation of its principles, we now come to

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER;

which must be connected with that of the tares and the wheat;—the latter being little more than an amplification of the same image, and a solemn application of the sentiments which he had previously advanced.

I.—THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

“Behold, a sower went forth to sow: And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

We have already observed, that every parable has one leading sentiment; which it is necessary to ascertain, in order to give a fair and consistent exposition of it. The object of *this* parable is, to represent *the different effects of the Gospel upon different characters*; whom he divides into

four classes. Accordingly, in the explanation of it, which he makes to his disciples, he passes over the subordinate parts of the image; and goes directly to this point, by unfolding the kinds of hearers to whom he alluded, and the different reception which they would give his word. "Hear ye, therefore, the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way-side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that receiveth seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty."

After this impressive comment of our Lord upon his own parable, it is impossible for us to mistake it's import; and we may proceed with the

greater degree of confidence to apply the sentiment to ourselves.

1. *The seed is the word of God.*—It is called *seed*, because it has life in itself: where it finds a suitable soil, it cannot fail to vegetate. It is called *good seed*, because it produces that only which is good. Thorns and thistles have their seed also: but every seed produces it's own kind, and can produce no other. The principles of the gospel are right, and it's influence must be holy. It is called *incorruptible seed*, because it is a principle which cannot be eradicated, when it has once taken possession of the bosom: it lives in despite of persecution, and affliction, and death itself. The seed is the *germin* of the plant; it is that in which all the principles of vegetation are folded up. The gospel becomes the instrument of communicating life to the soul, when it's great truths are applied by the Holy Spirit; and the very principle of the christian's life and character is a transfer of the revealed will of God from the bible to his heart: it is the law of God embodied in obedience: it is the fulfilment of the promise, "I will put my laws into their inward parts, and write them upon their hearts." Should it be imagined that we impute to this word a vital principle irrespective of Divine agency, it is answered, that the representation of any natural seed as having life in itself, is not removing it's dependance

upon the Author of nature, who implanted the germ of vitality there, and by whose will and power alone it can vegetate and grow. Indisputably, in the selection of this image, our Lord intended to intimate a similar principle in his word, implanted by the same hand, and dependent upon the same agency. The dependance is as strongly marked as the principle: for as the seed cannot spring without the secret hand of God working its increase, and the concurrence of many auspicious circumstances,—of soil, and sun, and air; so neither can this word be effectual, except as it is accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the heart is prepared for its reception. Thus accompanied, it contains all the principles which can form the character and supply the wants of the christian. It is the word of eternal life, producing, instrumentally, a principle of vitality there, and nourishing it, until it rises into glory and immortality.

2. *The sower is the gospel ministry.*—There can be no doubt that he primarily intended himself. By him the word of life was dispensed with a diligence which shames our more feeble efforts, and with a wisdom which could never mistake the times and the seasons. He provided the seed which he scattered, and dispersed it with judgment and promptitude. Indefatigable in his labours, the multitude fainted in their attendance, while he

gave himself no respite. Regarding him as a teacher, all others must yield to his superiority. His wisdom, his tenderness, his persuasion, his energy, all induce us to wonder how it was possible to resist his sermons. In every point of view it may well be said, "*Behold !* a sower went forth to sow." The dignity of the person who stooped to such an employment ; the assiduity with which he laboured ; the benevolent design which he held in view—to infuse into the hearts of men just principles, to inspire them with noble sentiments, to impart to them a holy character ; are all calculated to excite our astonishment, and to command our admiration. What incalculable advantages must have been attached to such a ministry ! It was certain that He would scatter only good seed. He knew how to distinguish truth from error : He as faithfully detected the one, as he powerfully enforced the other.

The character of a parable which is intended to apply to all ages, requires us to expound this term as applying not exclusively to Jesus Christ, but to the *apostles*, who, by his immediate appointment, entered into his labours,—and to their successors in the *gospel ministry*, to the end of time. Wherever, and by whomsoever, the word of this salvation is dispensed, this seed is scattered. When the steps of a faithful minister ascend the pulpit, we behold a sower going forth to sow.

This image instructs us in the duties of our office. We are bound to be diligent in the discharge of our duty; and we cannot be indifferent to the close of our labours. "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth; and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." We ought not to despair, if the effects of our ministry do not immediately appear; nor to expect the crop when the grain is scarcely sown. Above all things, it is our duty to take heed to ourselves that we sow only the good seed of the kingdom—that we dispense none but the doctrines of Christ—that we do not presume to mix our own speculations or human opinions with his pure word. From mingled seed, the devices of man with the commands of God, a crop indeed may spring, but it will be a harvest of tears and misery. No preaching can be effectual to the saving of the soul, or beneficial to society, but that which is founded exclusively upon the doctrines and principles of the gospel. Nor should we ever forget to look up to Him who provided the seed, and himself scattered it, for a blessing upon our labours. It is of small consequence what "sower goes forth to sow;" the Divine power can alone produce the harvest. Paul may plant, Apollos may water; but it is God who must give the increase. And let it be remembered, the sower is gone forth to sow;

the gospel is preached; the eye of God is following it's career, and marking it's reception; and the responsibility of the world corresponds with it's privileges.

3. *The recipients of this good seed represent various descriptions of hearers.*—The way-side, the rocky country, the thorny soil, the good ground, have all their distinct and important reference. Through the corn-field a beaten track is often seen, as a path-way; when the ground is ploughed, *that* is left; and when the sower scatters the seed, the grain which falls upon it remains exposed, and is devoured by the birds. This is an image sufficiently intelligible; but in the East it must have been so much the more impressive, because the sparrows abound to that degree in Persia, &c. that only by dint of incessant watching, and the employment of many peasants for the purpose of scaring the birds, can they preserve the grain in their fields*. Therefore St. Mark, in repeating this parable, represents the seed by the highway as “trodden down” by passengers passing over it, and *yet* as picked up by the fowls of heaven.

The hearers by the *way-side* represent incidental or inattentive hearers; such as enter our sanctuaries by accident, and do not comprehend the truths delivered; or from curiosity, and seeking no

* *Thevenot.*

benefit from them. Accidental attendance, and from unworthy motives, may, in the inscrutable scheme of divine providence, be rendered effectual; but assuredly such an event is not in the line of the divine appointment: "They hear the word of the kingdom, and understand it not." Yet is the gospel plain in it's doctrines and in it's precepts: the fault rests with themselves. Either they have not applied to it with a frequency which could render it intelligible, or they have been careless under it's ministry. It is mortifying to reflect how many years some professors listen to the word preached; and how vague and indistinct are even their notions of the most simple principles of religion. They do not take heed how they hear. Their state is dangerous. They expose themselves to the adversary, who is waiting to destroy: "Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in the heart." They invite temptation; they do themselves the work of the destroyer; they weaken the efficacy of religious services, by familiarizing themselves with the means, without regarding the end. Upon such hearers little impression is made at the first, and none that is lasting.

The seed falling on *stony ground* represents superficial and undecided hearers,—those whose passions are easily excited, whose zeal is easily awakened, but whose knowledge is small; and their

principles unsettled. A little earth is spread over the rock; the seed springs soon, because it is lightly covered. It promises fair, and awakens our hopes: it shoots high, and perishes soon. Perhaps these are the most common characters to be found among the professors of religion. It is scarcely possible to hear the gospel preached altogether unmoved. Its truths are so sublime, they must elevate; so affecting, they must melt; so convincing, they must approve themselves to every man's conscience: but the goodness of Ephraim resembles the morning cloud;—as the early dew it passeth away. They listen, approve, are affected—

and we expect the fruits of our labours. While we look for the harvest in vain, we hear the Master say, "Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not."

A different class of hearers is presented under the image of the seed which fell among thorns. These are the lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God; the rich, who trust in uncertain riches; the anxious—all whose souls and feelings are absorbed in the cares of life, and who are asking, "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" These are careful about many things, and forget that one thing is needful. It is not often that we can so

far disengage them from the world, as to draw their attention to eternal subjects : and if we succeed so far on the sabbath, the resolutions formed in the sanctuary, the fears alarmed, the hopes awakened, the conscience touched, all yield to the returns of business—all vanish when the world approaches, and resumes it's wonted influence.

The seed committed to the *good* ground represents the man whose heart is prepared to receive the truth in the love of it; and whose understanding is enlightened to perceive it's adaptation to his own wants, and it's harmony with the divine perfections. In all these cases,

4. *The effects correspond with the principles.*—The occasional hearer amuses an hour, unable to analyze his own feelings, unconscious of the worth of that which is offered to him ; and thinks of the truths advanced no more. The careless bear the repetition of them with increased responsibility, and as little advantage. “But he ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass : for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.” Thus, when we hold the mirror of truth up to these indifferent professors, it is seldom that they perceive their own likeness; and never do they retain

the remembrance of it. If these are easily deprived of their impressions, such as they are,—the superficial, while they advance farther, and awaken stronger expectations, make us feel disappointment more keenly. These understood the word, and received it with all joy; but “unstable as water, they do not excel.” If the former provoked us by their insensibility, these discourage us by their want of principle. Their profession will not endure the test of affliction: “When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” They walk with us long enough to win upon our affections, and desert us in the hour when we most need consolation. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” They make their choice, and they must abide its consequences. But should any such wavering professor be in this assembly to-night, before he departs let him hear the sentence of his Lord: “Who-soever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, before this adulterous and wicked generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels.”

Upon the *worldly* we have no hold. With them the good seed is stifled as it springs. They deceive

us less, yet distress us much. Here is soil which might be cultivated, but for the thorns,—a powerful mind, a quick perception, a sound judgment, a persevering spirit; but all these are pre-occupied; no space is left for religion. The mind has taken it's direction, and refuses to be turned. In vain the treasures of the gospel are unfolded: the man has chosen his portion; it is visible in his pursuits,—for “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Heaven is sacrificed to interest.

But the *good ground* produces abundantly. The perception of truth is clear in the mind of the christian. He “heareth the word, and understandeth it.” He comprehends it's declarations, and acknowledges it's importance. He knows how to value, and how to improve it. Corresponding results appear;—as the principles which he receives are holy, his character is pure, and his life exemplary. As on the part of worldly characters the sources of danger are not the same in respect of all, (for some are destroyed by adversity, in the prevalence of their cares; and others are ruined by prosperity, in the indulgence of their riches,) so the same principle in the christian, producing the same effects, varies as to it's degrees: in some it is stronger, and more fruitful; in others, it is weaker, and less productive; but in all it is permanent—it bears “fruit unto holiness, and the end is everlasting life.”

We pass to the consideration of **THE TARES AND THE WHEAT**, a similitude which immediately follows; which corresponds in its leading features with the imagery already examined; and which, when it is considered with the exposition attached to it by our Lord, will appear an enlargement and application of the sentiments contained in the parable of the Sower. The object of this parable also is one;—it is to *illustrate the mixed state of religious society*; and to point out alike our duty under these circumstances, and the justice of God in his final discriminations of characters; and the sentence which shall be passed upon them respectively.

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came, and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them: Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of

"harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye
 "together first the tares, and bind them in bun-
 "dles to burn them: but gather the wheat into
 "my barn." And this is his exposition: "He
 "that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man:
 "The field is the world: the good seed are the
 "children of the kingdom; but the tares are the
 "children of the wicked one: The enemy that
 "sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the
 "end of the world; and the reapers are the
 "angels: As therefore the tares are gathered
 "and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the
 "end of this world. The Son of Man shall send
 "forth his angels, and they shall gather out of
 "his kingdom all things that offend, and them
 "which work iniquity; and shall cast them into
 "a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and
 "gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous
 "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their
 "Father?"

It is necessary to observe, that the weed spoken
 of in this parable is not properly rendered *tares*:
 but a noxious plant peculiar to the East, ap-
 proaching most nearly the *darnel* of our corn-
 fields; and resembling their wheat in almost all
 points, until its maturity, when it is discovered by
 some slight differences; such as, that it is coarser,
 and less compact; but principally by its want of
 fruit: a few grains only appearing in a large full

ear, and these easily shaken out by the wind. It is found to be not merely unprofitable, but destructive; not merely occupying the ground uselessly, but choking the real crop: it has therefore been called '*the destruction of grain*.' It "not only deprives the corn of it's nourishment; "but it's seed, mingled with the meal, occasions "inebriety, vertigoes, and often a lethargic and "mortal torpidity*." The ancients said, that it injured both the head and the eyes. Our tares are a pulse which may be used; but this weed, if it can be happily separated from the wheat, is fit only for fuel.

We fix our eyes upon "the tares" as comprising every department of life—every variety of character of which the mass of mankind is composed—every unrenewed mind. The wise and the foolish, the sensualist and the formalist, the hypocrite and the sceptic, the profane and the mere professor—all these are but shades of a common nature, branches of a common stock, children of a common parent, of that wicked spirit who worketh in the hearts of disobedience. The wheat embraces genuine christians, of every name, and under every form of worship, subsisting in every nation; for the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the king-

* See Scripture Illustrated.

dom; and this seed is scattered abroad over the whole earth, and not restricted to any particular spot. The association of these in their common intercourse and localities is the leading feature of the text—as to the fact, and our duty; and the harvest leads forward our attention to that solemn period, in which all our joys and sorrows, all our hopes and fears, all our labours and indulgences, merge—in which all characters shall be disclosed, and all destinies fixed—the end of the *world*.

Respecting the “tares and the wheat”—the righteous and the wicked—two things are to be observed; their present union, and their final separation.

1. *Their present union.*—“They grow together.” This develops its character. It is not an union of choice, but of necessity; a local contact. I distinguish between that connection with the world which circumstances superinduce, and that alliance which the will contracts. The tares and the wheat, sown together, and growing together, have still nothing common in their nature, their appearance, and their destination. It is fruitless to dissuade a man from worldly connections, whose heart is unrenewed: he is one of them, and must work with them. It is unnecessary to persuade a christian against an union which he instinctively and from principle abhors. The pursuits of the world are abhorrent

to his principles; it's pleasures unsuitable to his taste; it's society irksome to his mental bias. He may endure, but he cannot love such company. And thus the feelings, awakened by this necessary and incidental combination, at once determine the character. It will not be resisted with imperious self-complacency: the christian will not say to his unhallowed neighbour, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou," but he may be permitted to sigh in secret, and to say, "Woe is me, that I remain in Mesek, and dwell in the tents of Kedar!" and he will stretch the wings of desire, and ask, "When shall I come and appear before God?"

They grow together! This supposes a similarity of advantages. They occupy the same field; are watered by the same rain; warmed by the same sun; refreshed with the same dews. The world has equal advantages with the christian. The doors of the sanctuary are opened to them: sabbaths are afforded them: the Bible is put into their hands; but they care for none of these things. The tares remain tares, and the wheat, wheat; no circumstances can alter their nature. And, oh! what an awful lesson does this read to professors of religion, who avail themselves of all the christian's privileges, but never discover an assimilation of character. These tares are found in the field of God—these worldly, sensual spirits in his Church—they grow together. But he looks,

and says, "Their spot is not the spot of my children; and that judgment is formed now which shall be ratified another day." "They grow together." This supposes mutual advancement. The character of each is upon the increase. The christian is growing in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour; the professor and the sinner are "waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Every day produces an effect, and that for eternity. In patience, in humility, in love, in zeal, in purity, the good man is maturing. He adds to his faith, "virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity." These things "are in him and abound." And every day hardens the impenitent and the hypocrite in their obstinacy and deceit. Every day familiarizes the sensualist with vice. Every day increases the love and dominion of sin. They must grow; and their mutual progress will be soon complete. "They grow together." This implies a similarity of condition—a certain resemblance. They have some things in common, some concerns not incompatible. In the present state, their mutual duties and interests may flow together; yet when this is the case, the spirit and temper which they will bring into the same pursuit will be different. They are here, the heirs of the same patrimony—fears and disappointments; but their feelings and

conduct, under their afflictions or their joys, will not correspond. They are brethren as to the flesh; of the same nature; bone of each other's bone; of the same infirmities; exposed to the same wants; feeling alike the summer's sun and the winter's frost; acknowledging the same ties; exercising the same intellectual faculties;—and yet each accomplishes his work, and carries himself in his own way. With all their natural resemblance, there is a spiritual difference. With all the similarity of their circumstances, there is a material separation. They walk together, and yet are not agreed. The tares and the wheat grow together, and yet are perfectly distinguishable.

“They grow together.”—And this is *permitted* for various reasons. As a *test* of character. The exact principles of each are best seen by the contrast which they form to each other. Professors of religion are not only thrown into the same circumstances, and enjoy the same advantages as the christian, but they imitate them in their language and observances. The world pass by and say, “They are the same:” the consequence is, they charge home upon the christian all the irregularities and sensuality indulged by the professor. But this inference can be drawn only by a superficial observer, on a transient comparison. He who will examine with fidelity, will soon distinguish between the tares and the wheat: and because he

would be most liable to err if these were remote and the comparison distant, they are placed side by side, and the test is intended for the parties themselves; that when they at least discover the dissimilarity of their spirit, and pursuits, and feelings, and desires, they may infer the difference of principle, and conclude accordingly,—the professor to his confusion, the christian to his comfort.

It is permitted for the *Divine glory*. For when these tares are rejected, it was not for want of privileges: What could be done for them more than was done? And He will require even the world to judge the justice of his sentence, when it shall be passed only upon those who manifestly were tares. And this leads us to notice in brief,

2. *Their final separation*.—They can grow together only for a season. Justice must be satisfied, as well as mercy displayed. Every representation in this volume is worthy the Divine character, and consistent with all the conceptions we are capable of forming of his moral government. He never punishes without giving a space for repentance. This, although large, has its limits. During one hundred and twenty years, he pleaded with the old world by the ministry of Noah. In vain the patriarch wept, and exhorted, and entreated. Derision followed his work, and disobedience planted in his heart the pangs of disappointment. At last the hour of retribution arrived. The reign of

mercy closed. The artillery of wrath played upon his adversaries—they found no escape: the rights of justice were vindicated, and the earth mourned the death of her degenerate sons. “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be.”

The appointed time for this separation is the *harvest*. “The harvest is the end of the world;” and it is so called, because it is the maturity and finish of human affairs. The scheme of Providence is consummated: the purposes of redemption are answered. On the part of the impenitent, the measure of their iniquity is full. On the part of the saints, their trials are ended, and their graces perfected. These opposite characters are divided in the death; but the public and eternal separation takes place at the judgment.

Their *different destinies* are marked in this parable—devouring fire for the one; immortal glory for the other:—the one is gathered home to his friends, to his God; the other punished with everlasting destruction from his presence. Of these last, hypocrites always form a large proportion. The christian is recompensed, not *on account of* his works, but *according to* them.

Is this the end of unprincipled professors? Let us imbibe the amiable spirit of this parable, and not antedate their misery: “Let both grow to-

gether until the harvest." Do not sentence and root out. Do not invade the province of the Deity. Do not desire to be an executioner. Do not deprive them of the means of salvation. Do not expel them your sanctuaries. Give them your pity and your prayers. And examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. "Whoso hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

and it is so called, because it is the maturity and finish of human affairs. The scheme of Providence is consummated; the purposes of redemption are answered. On the part of the impenitent, the measure of their iniquity is full. On the part of the saints, their trials are ended, and their graces perfected. These opposite characters are divided in the death; but the public and eternal separation takes place at the judgment.

Their different destinies are marked in this parable—devouring fire for the one; immortal glory for the other:—the one is gathered home to his friends, to his God; the other punished with everlasting destruction from his presence. Of these last, hypocrites always form a large proportion. The christian is recompensed, not on account of his works, but according to them.

Is this the end of unprincipled professors? Let us imbed the annals of this parable, and not anticipate their misery: "Let both grow to-

LECTURE VI.

THE DEBTORS.

MATT. VI. 12.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

WHEN the illustrious rival of Demosthenes, after an unsuccessful struggle to share with him the palm of eloquence, retreated from the public eye to conceal his defeat in retirement, he had the magnanimity to place the oration which had occasioned his disgrace in the hands of his pupils: and when he saw their countenances kindling as they read it, until they were unable longer to restrain their feelings, which broke out into expressions of unbounded admiration, so far from suffering jealousy to withhold from his victor the well-earned meed of praise, he encouraged their enthusiasm, and exclaimed, "What then would you have said, if you had heard him deliver it?" With reflections somewhat correspondent, I read the sermons of our Lord and his apostles, as they are recorded in the sacred volume. Glowing and elegant passages, presented only to the eye, lose half the efficacy they possessed,

when the ear was associated with this sense, and when every sentiment was embellished by corresponding tones and gestures. The orations of such men as Demosthenes and Cicero may well be admired: for what must have been their original fire, when they retain so much heat still, and present themselves to us so advantageously, without the auxiliaries of manner and emphasis, after the lapse of so many years, and when the interests which excited them have ceased! The sermons of our Lord, and of his apostles, have the disadvantages common to all written discourses; and some peculiar to themselves. They are transmitted to us mere fragments—as sketches, hastily but faithfully drawn. And if, for instance, the train of discussion pursued by St. Paul at Athens, appearing on the pages of the Acts of the Apostles as a line faintly traced by a masterly hand, rushes through the mind, and overpowers the feelings; what must it have been to have seen and heard him on that occasion, when his spirit was stirred within him, and he stood to plead the cause of truth and religion, surrounded by the altars of superstition, and the images of idolatry! If the imagination is early inspired by the most beautiful specimens of classical eloquence, the judgment must often regret that so much force should be wasted upon subjects so trivial—upon circumstances local and transient, upon fading interests: and still more

must the moral taste be shocked, that these illustrious talents should be, as they frequently were, prostituted to the service of vice; and heavenly eloquence debased to excuse or commend brutal passions. This accusation can never be alleged against the inspired volume. Superior to all other writings in the majesty of it's style, it infinitely excels them in the character of it's subjects: it never seduces, never trifles, never advocates or extenuates evil: it is irresistibly eloquent, and it is essentially true.

To these writings, therefore, rather than to any of the admired models of antiquity, should the preacher go, to gather both the matter and the manner of his sermons. It may become the physician to compare his knowledge and experience with the researches and observations of others celebrated in former ages for excelling in his science. It behoves the politician to be versed in the history of ancient as well as modern times, that he may be well acquainted with the secret springs of government, and develope the causes which impede or facilitate their operation. It is profitable to the sculptor to recur to the remaining specimens of those mighty masters of an art which was long upon the decline, and which has not yet wholly recovered those just proportions and that graceful symmetry which distinguished the chisels of antiquity. Nor would we deprive the minister of those gratifications which must result to him, as a scholar, from

an acquaintance with the pages of classical literature: but as a preacher, we send him to learn his science, and the best method of imparting it, to the models presented in the scriptures themselves; and call him from the Grecian or the Roman orator, to learn of Peter, and Paul, and James, and John; above all, to sit at the feet of Jesus himself. For, if these remarks are just respecting the servants, they must apply, with still greater force, to the Master; and the parables of Jesus contain more perfect examples of the wisdom and beauty of his instructions, than any sketches of his continued discourses furnish; because they are finished, as to the detail of their imagery; they are not mere outline—they are filled up; and the occasions of them are recorded sufficiently to enable us to ascertain with precision the sentiment conveyed in the figure employed.

In connection with the subject of this lecture, we have some strongly figurative expressions, which, if they amount not absolutely to parables, are so connected with imagery as to require explanation, and so important in their admonitions as to demand the most serious attention. *Whence*—“*for, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee,*

“ pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better
“ for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather
“ than having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire*.”

Whoever has formed an acquaintance with the hyperbolical language of the East, will not be astonished at the strength of these expressions: to such persons it will be evident that the style of the scriptures is as chastised in comparison with the oriental forms of speaking, as it is chaste and beautiful in itself. There seems to have been throughout a marked adaptation of the terms in which religious truth was conveyed to the universality which must be eventually attached to revelation. Impressive and forcible as is the passage just recited, there is nothing unintelligible in its figures to any country into whose tongue the Bible might be translated; while the importance of the sentiments intended to be conveyed, justifies the most powerful language which could be selected. The import of the admonition seems to be two-fold: the first, that we should resolutely part with whatever might impede us in our aim at eternal life, although precious as an eye, and apparently necessary as a foot. There must be no competition suffered between present and future things. Not only must conveniencies be surrendered to our everlasting interests; but those things must be resigned which

* Mat. xviii. 8, 9.

habit and circumstances appear to have made part of ourselves. When, in primitive times, the persecution extended only to the wasting and sequestration of property, it became a subject of joy to those ardent spirits that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ: and when it became necessary for them to renounce their family, or when their fidelity to religion turned the heart of the child from the parent, of the wife from the husband, of the sister from the brother—of the friend from his chosen and tried companion,—

“Some natural tears they dropt; but wip’d them soon.”

Nature claimed her debt of feeling. They paid it with melancholy cheerfulness; and consoled themselves in His promises, whose providence tried their faith and love, and whose smiles more than counterbalanced all that they had lost. This was indeed plucking out a “right eye,” and parting with “a hand” or with “a foot.” But the principle is carried even farther than this; and the second import of the passage doubtless refers to man, and not to God. This appears clearly, from the introduction of this parable. “Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” The irritable state of the passions, and the uncontrollable career of human events, will engender anger, and alienation of heart from each other: but the immediate instrument of

any separation is not therefore less guilty. And what calamitous events result from the haste with which we take offence, and the tenacity with which we sustain it ! Look at the torrents of blood which have been shed upon misapprehension, or, at best, for trifles ; and, after the conflict has been kept up from year to year, and thousands of gallant spirits have been sacrificed, and as many orphans and widows made, the contending parties consent mutually to wave their respective claims, drop the original point in dispute, and satisfy themselves with restoring things as nearly as possible to the state in which they were before the sword was drawn : look at this, and say, “ Woe unto the world because of offences ! ” Of contentions more private and less destructive, but not less fierce, “ this is the sum : ”—and after the spirits are exhausted, the affections chilled, the passions embittered, men find out that it is possible to agree, and even upon the points of their original discord. Why was not this discovered earlier ? and all the uneasiness caused by division, all the waste of the milk of human kindness occasioned by strife, wisely and benevolently spared ? To teach this useful and interesting lesson is the object of the benign, but figurative, admonition of our Lord. Let us rather relinquish our comforts, than wound and irritate others : let us rather suffer privation ourselves, than minister, by indulgence, fuel to the bad passions which burn and

rage around us. Where is the hero to be found who will follow the Captain of our salvation into this field of self-denial; and maintain a resolute and sharp conflict with himself, rather than give occasion of offence to his brother? Where is the courage which can endure to lose, without murmuring, the eye, the hand, the foot, rather than inflict an unnecessary pang upon his neighbour, or subject the cause of religion to unjust reproach? The warrior who returns from a thousand fields, in every instance triumphant, and with a brow shadowed and enwreathed with all their laurels, is not to be compared with the hero who conquers his own spirit, and spares the feelings of another. And *this* is the temper recommended, *this* the achievement proposed, in the forcible and expressive imagery employed by our Lord.

Allied in spirit to these sentiments is the parable describing the perverse temper of those before whom he opened his high commission. "Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not wept*."—The market-place was the place of public resort,

* Luke vii. 31, 32.

not for merchandize alone, but for diversion and necessity alike. There the labourers stood to be hired; and there children assembled for their sports. The spirit condemned, under this familiar image, is a *ensorious* temper—a temper which cannot be pleased, whatever methods are employed to interest it—a disposition to judge ill, and to speak ill of every transaction, however opposite. Such tempers there are, who will put a wrong construction upon our gaiety or our seriousness, our openness or our reserve. Resolved to be displeased, they can never be kept in good humour. Like wayward children, who refuse to associate with their companions, to enter into their arrangements, whether sportive or serious,—but resolutely bent to crush every proposal, and to resist every accommodation,—they embitter their own comfort, and destroy the peace of others. Such unamiable spirits encompassed our Lord, and impeded his ministry. Every thing furnished occasion for displeasure; and it was impossible to conciliate them. “For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine,”—his abstemiousness offended; “and ye say, He hath a devil”—he is a demoniac—a man under the influence of an evil spirit, or of a morose and melancholic temperature. “The Son of man,” reversing this method, and relaxing this rigidity, “is come eating and drinking,” mixing in your assemblies, sitting down at the social but

temperate board, with all ranks and classes of people, that he might benefit all by his instructions and example; "and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Can nothing be devised to check and shame this bitter and censorious spirit? "But Wisdom is justified of all her children." They approve themselves to the conscience, although the spleen of their opposers will not allow them to acknowledge their convictions;—and, which is more, consistent with themselves, however they may be misrepresented, they shall have the approbation of God.

But not exclusively to condemn a censorious spirit did our Lord speak this parable, although this was manifestly his leading intention: the illustration employed reaches to the arraignment of a *want of sympathy* in human intercourse. The sports of children usually turn upon events of real life, although the combinations of circumstances are fanciful and disproportionate. They imitate, on their small scale of action, what they consider to be the characters of human existence. These Eastern children are acting the scenes of life, such as they were presented to their observation. In circumstances of joy, songs of triumph followed the conqueror, or the bridegroom. In seasons of woe, even sorrow sought solace in music, or expressed

it's poignancy by corresponding dirges, as the mourners went about the streets. These children copied the customs of maturer age, and peculiar to their country; and cast their play after the expressions of joy and mourning to which they were accustomed. But these morose, unyielding spirits refused to act the part assigned them: they were neither moved by the notes of imitative joy, nor those of imagined sorrow; they neither rejoiced nor mourned. Such are minds void of holy sympathy, who know not how to feel, nor how to console; who encase themselves in the adamant breast-plate of brutal selfishness, and exclude from their hearts, if they cannot from their senses, the exultation or the sufferings of others. But let us learn to "rejoice with those who rejoice; and to weep with those who weep:" so shall we resemble Him, who always sympathized in the changing emotions of humanity; who contributed to it's pleasures, and soothed it's afflictions; and who thus proved himself to be "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." In thus ministering to the felicity, or diminishing the anguish of others, we are also securing our own peace, cultivating the best and noblest principles of human nature, and adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour.

These figures embrace all that is dependent upon

the discussion of this evening, in the chapters from which it is to be selected ; for

THE DEBTORS

will comprise two parables, elucidating two important sentiments, arising out of one most interesting subject.

The FIRST of these is contained in the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, from the twenty-first verse to the end : and this entire passage will connect the *occasion* of the parable with the parable itself.

“ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how
“ oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive
“ him ? till seven times ? Jesus saith unto him,
“ I say not unto thee, Until seven times ; but,
“ Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the
“ kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king,
“ which would take account of his servants.
“ And when he had begun to reckon, one was
“ brought unto him which owed him ten thousand
“ talents : But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his
“ lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife
“ and children, and all that he had, and payment
“ to be made. The servant therefore fell down,
“ and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience
“ with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord
“ of that servant was moved with compassion, and
“ loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the

“ same servant went out, and found one of his
“ fellow-servants which owed him an hundred
“ pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him
“ by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.
“ And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and
“ besought him, saying, Have patience with me,
“ and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but
“ went and cast him into prison, till he should
“ pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw
“ what was done, they were very sorry, and came
“ and told unto their lord all that was done. Then
“ his lord, after that he had called him, said unto
“ him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all
“ that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest
“ not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-
“ servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his
“ lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tor-
“ mentors, till he should pay all that was due unto
“ him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do
“ also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not
“ every one his brother their trespasses.”

There is something in the inquiry which gave birth to this solemn imagery, which almost induces the conclusion that the apostle was afraid he should transcend the bounds of moderation in bearing the infirmities of others. The answer of the Saviour, in placing a large but definite number to signify an indefinite one, proves to him, that he cannot exceed propriety, or the divine requi-

sition, in these acts of mercy. But whatever might be the intention of St. Peter in his proposition, the precept is determinate and universal; and whatever ornamental or necessary circumstances are introduced into the parable, the sentiment is one. It is, *that the pardon which we solicit and receive from the hand of God, requires the exercise of forbearance and forgiveness towards each other.* There is no principle so just in itself, the obligation of which is felt so little, as to any practical result, as this admirable precept. We are but too disposed to extenuate our own offences towards God, thus lessening the sense of our obligation; while we magnify the offences of others against ourselves into crimes of the highest order, and visit them with the most vehement and implacable resentment. To counteract this unhappy tendency, and to inculcate better sentiments—worthy his disciples, and essential to his religion—he spake this parable. And we must examine

1. *The conduct of the sovereign towards his servant.*
—The comparison of the Deity to a sovereign is consistent with those feelings respecting his greatness which it is the invariable purpose of the scriptures to inspire. When the parable requires it, he is represented as a shepherd, a husbandman, a parent, a master: but when, without destroying the nature and simplicity of the imagery chosen, a

tribute can be paid to a majesty of which all human grandeur and power are but faint shadows, such homage is always tendered with promptitude and humility. To enthrone God with the sovereigns of the earth, is at best to fall infinitely short of His splendour and authority, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. But it is carrying the image as far as the organization of society can carry it. And the figure is here peculiarly appropriate to the subject of the parable; because it supposed a being every way equal to the enforcement of every demand which he made, and of inflicting every punishment which seemed to be incurred, by investing him with the attributes of sovereignty.

The dignity of the personage introduced does not exclude a personal *attention to his concerns*—He “would take account of his servants.” Philosophy, in pointing out the immeasurable extent of the Divine operations, almost justified the conclusion that the Deity was too great to condescend to human affairs, either by marking their results, or directing their career. It was the distinguished glory of revelation to rescue the human mind from a conclusion so gloomy in it's character, so pernicious in it's influence, and so dishonourable to the Eternal Majesty. While more correct and enlarged views of the Infinite demonstrated that nothing could be deemed great or small before him—that the eye which follows a planet cannot

overlook an aton—christianity connected with his omnipresence the paternity of his character, and shewed “his tender mercies over all his works.”

With this comfortable conviction human responsibility is linked; and while we have a Friend always near us, we are amenable to a Judge also who cannot be deceived, and who will try every work, and every spirit, what it is.

The *debt of the servant* discloses at once the extent of our obligations, and the countless multitude of our offences. Ten thousand talents amount to more than a million of our money; and however contracted, the sum was far greater than he was able to repay. Such a debt have we contracted in the time which we have mispent, the property which we have wasted—the talents which we have misapplied, and the sins which we have committed. The recollections of past offences are intolerable and overwhelming: and fearful as is the list which conscience presents, “the half hath not been told us.” Some infirmities escaped us at the moment of their developement; but they were marked by the omniscient eye of God. Others have been blotted out from our memory, by the scenes and circumstances which have passed over them: but they are yet recorded in his book. Those which remain on our conscience, and which haunt our silent and solitary hours, are softened down by time: as we remove from them,

distance diminishes their magnitude ; our impressions respecting their atrocity have worn away ; their remoteness almost seems an atonement for them ; but they are yet in the sight of God such as they always were :—the debt long contracted appears to us less oppressive ; but while it remains uncanceled, it preserves all it's hold upon us, and retains all it's consequences.

The utter *inability* of the debtor to discharge his formidable arrears is very distinctly marked ; and cannot be too frequently or too faithfully repeated, to crush that self-righteous spirit which inflates the man with pride, while it involves him in eternal ruin. Upon this grand and unquestionable principle, the whole scheme of human redemption proceeds. If it be denied, christianity is unavailing to the individual by whom it is repelled. Salvation is either of debt, or of grace ; it cannot be of both : and if we are able to meet the Deity as our creditor—if we can cancel the demand which is made upon us—then did Jesus mistake the condition of human nature, and his mission and sacrifice were alike useless. On this one principle every thing depends. Relinquished, we undertake to be our own saviours, and incur a corresponding responsibility ;—allowed and felt, we rely implicitly on Him who died for sinners ; and commit our salvation to his dear and faithful hands, “ who came to seek and to save that which was lost.”

The *claims of justice* are advanced. “Forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made”—in so far as such an arrangement could go; for this is manifestly inadequate to the greatness of the debt. The customs of the East, and the practice of those times, gave a creditor, or a master, as entire a right over the person of his servant as over his property, and over his family as over himself; and the statement of the parable correctly accords with the measures invariably adopted in such cases. Happily, we live in a day, and in a country, furnishing us with practices so dissimilar, that every feeling of the heart revolts from such a cruel law. The person only of the debtor can be touched; his family are free; and for the principle on which such a power proceeded, it is renounced—it is unknown:

- “Slaves cannot breathe in England. If their lungs
- “Receive our air, that moment they are free.
- “They touch our country, and their shackles fall.”

Christianity has produced this great distinction of Britain from other nations less under her influence. Christianity gives man his just rights; and teaches those, to whose hands she confides sceptres, to respect them, as amenable to her merciful laws. But while the parable justly and

necessarily delineates the state of society as it then was, an important sentiment is advanced;—the process of justice must be allowed, in order to establish the validity of the claim. God, who freely pardons, first enumerates the demands of his righteous law, and proves the insolvency of the debtor whom his compassion releases.

The *grant of pardon* followed this severely just sentence. Made sensible of his condition, he was a proper object of divine mercy. We have here an instance of something conceded to the integrity of the *image*, which is not applicable in *fact*. The plea for time, on the promise of discharging the demand, cannot correspond with our utter helplessness and destitution: and it appears that the Lord of this servant exceeded his petition for a longer season of forbearance, and forgave the debt fully and freely. Thus must every man be forgiven who stands acquitted in the sight of God: and nothing so fully displays the majesty of the Divine character, as the extent and freeness with which he distributes his pardons.

2. We have to reverse this benevolent scene, in disclosing *the mean and petulant conduct of this hardened wretch*, towards an equal, unhappily placed within his power.

The debt was *inconsiderable* in itself, and still more so in comparison with that from the pay-

ment of which he had been released. The obligations of man to man must be limited : and carrying them to the farthest extent to which they can reach, they will not correspond with the claims of the Deity upon us ;—they can be but as the “ hundred pence” to the “ ten thousand talents.” We often overrate our services ; often estimate the little assistance we can lend to others far beyond it’s real value ; while we are in the habit of continually weakening the consciousness of our own obligations, not only to God, but to each other.

The course which he pursued was *violent* : he “ laid hands upon him, and took him by the throat.” How severely is power employed in human hands ! How shamelessly is authority abused !

—— “ Man, weak man,
“ Drest in a little brief authority,
“ Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
“ As make the angels weep.”——

The plea of his debtor was moderate, and his deportment *humble*. It is a difficult lesson for the proud heart of man to learn to humble itself before God ; but it is surely yet more difficult to submit ourselves to man. Every plea is taken away from this unpitying spirit : the obligation to him might in time have been cancelled ; and that time was implored with earnest entreaty and

abasement. "And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the debt."—How frequently do we extort to the last mite, from our fellow-men! We punish with unrelenting severity every failing: we remain unappeased amidst every concession. I do not now speak of harsh measures adopted in cases literally corresponding with that supposed in the text; where the poor debtor, torn from his family, and deprived of the means of liquidating his obligation, weeps away his days and nights of captivity;—from these scenes, humanity (not to say christianity) retreats:—but I refer to a spirit of resentment for injuries received or imagined, which refuses reconciliation, and rages, from year to year, with unmitigated fury.

This unfeeling conduct was reported to the lord of the unforgiving servant. His own gracious grant was revoked; and he was *punished* according to his own uncanceled offences. The delivering of him to "*tormentors*," expressed instead of the term gaolers, bears reference to the circumstances attending imprisonment in Eastern nations. State-criminals are not condemned simply to confinement (and the creditor here is a sovereign), but to fetters, heavy yokes, scourgings, racks, and even to privation of sight: torment is always connected with imprisonment in such cases. Having noticed this fact, I will not

further follow the parable into it's detail ; that I may better fix your attention upon the sentiment conveyed through the whole of it, and so forcibly summed up by our Lord himself, at it's close : " So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also " unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not " every one his brother their trespasses."—So awful an annunciation renders it highly important that we should distinctly understand the nature and extent, as well as obligation, of a duty so clearly expressed, and so solemnly enjoined.

The spirit of forgiveness inculcated is of difficult acquisition, and of great price. It is enjoined upon all men, without distinction of *rank* or temper. Some are better able to avenge themselves of their adversaries than others : but the weak must not cherish an impotent hatred, nor the great avail themselves of their authority to take vengeance out of HIS hand to whom it belongeth justly. Some possess a *temper* more gentle than others, and these concede their passions with greater facility : but the operation of christianity is universal, where it is effectual ; and all spirits must be bowed to it's sway, all dispositions subordinated to this law of love. Injuries of every *description* fall under this act of oblivion. We are touched more nearly by some things than by others. Our families are dearer than our persons : we are more tremblingly alive, at least, to the evils inflicted upon them,

than to those which fall merely upon ourselves: we can struggle through calamity; but our courage fails when they suffer. Yet we must learn the hard lesson of forgiving those who injure them. Our character is dearer to us than our property: yet while property is guarded by the laws, the slanderer prowls abroad unchecked and unabashed, a licensed plunderer of reputations—well received, and even caressed in society, because of a malignant disposition in human nature to hear evil of others, whether the tale circulated with avidity be true or false. Yet we must learn of our patient Lord to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers. The *extent* of the pardon is carried beyond the symbols of external reconciliation: it must be “from the heart,” and as in the sight of Him who judges the secrets thereof. The grant must be prompt, frank, sincere, and lasting. We must not cherish secret heart-burnings, which prove the fire covered, but not extinguished. We cannot indeed blot from our memory the transactions which wounded us; but they must not be willingly treasured up there, nor must they be remembered with resentment. If the recollection rekindle our anger, we have not pardoned the offence. We are not indeed again required to trust, when our confidence has been betrayed; nor to court an association which has proved to us replete with injury. This would be wantonly to expose our-

selves to insult and injustice. But we must relinquish all desire of revenge, all hatred and offence: we must be ready to pray for them; to assist them; to comfort them in their distress; to rejoice in their prosperity. And all this must be done from *principle*: not because the man is afraid to resent the injury, and to resist his adversary; not because it may be conducive to his interest to overlook the offence; but because God for Christ's sake hath forgiven him his sins; because it is the command and law of christianity; and because a spirit of love and forbearance is shed abroad in the heart. This is the great principle inculcated—as noble in itself, as honourable to God, as beneficial to society; and as important to the individual, as it is difficult in it's exercise, and rare in it's attainment.

The SECOND principle, arising out of pardoned sin, is exhibited in the parable spoken to the Pharisee, at whose table, on another occasion, our Lord sat; which in it's leading features corresponds with the imagery already examined*. “And one
“ of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat
“ with him. And he went into the Pharisee's
“ house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a
“ woman in the city, which was a sinner, when
“ she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's
“ house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment;

* Luke vii. 36—50.

“ And stood at his feet behind him, weeping; and
“ began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe
“ them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his
“ feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now
“ when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it,
“ he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he
“ were a prophet, would have known who and what
“ manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for
“ she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto
“ him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.
“ And he saith, Master, say on. There was a
“ certain creditor which had two debtors: the one
“ owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty:
“ And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly
“ forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which
“ of them will love him most? Simon answered
“ and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave
“ most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly
“ judged. And he turned to the woman, and said
“ unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered
“ into thine house, thou gavest me no water for
“ my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears,
“ and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou
“ gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the
“ time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.
“ Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint: but
“ this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.
“ Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are
“ many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but

“to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”
“And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.”
“And they that sat at meat with him began to say
“within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth
“sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith
“hath saved thee; go in peace.”

The *circumstances* of this history, and which gave occasion to the parable, are too interesting to be wholly overlooked, and too obvious to require lengthened exposition. From whatever motive the Pharisee might have invited Jesus to his table—whether from ostentation, from a design to scrutinize him more closely, from curiosity, from a wish to hear something further of his doctrines, it is evident that he neglected the rights of hospitality, in omitting those forms so common and so necessary in the East (where the feet pass over a dry and scorching soil, sustained only by sandals, and exposed to the dust), of giving water for ablution before meat, and the salutation of peace to his guest. These motives, whatever they were, did not deter the Saviour from entering the Pharisee's house, and these negligences did not offend him: he availed himself of every occasion of doing good, and set the example of that forbearance which he inculcated. The woman who followed him, and gave him public expressions of her regard, in performing those offices which the master of the house had omitted, was a notorious character, as is evident from the emotions which her presence

produced, and had probably been an harlot. To the Redeemer, however, she was indebted for pardon and salvation: the power which cancelled her guilt, released her also from the bondage of corruption: and although the marks of her regard were public, they were modest and retiring. Her courage, in venturing after her Lord, where she was sure of encountering censure,—her humility, in the station which she chose, at his feet behind him,—her tears, which flowed regardless of curiosity or contempt,—all indicated the sincerity of her repentance; and the fervour of her affection. To conceive of her position clearly, we must recollect that it was then the custom to dine in a recumbent, and not a sitting posture; that our Lord was placed upon a couch, in a position nearly horizontal, except that he was raised on the left elbow, for the purpose of having the right hand disengaged; and that this woman went round to the back of the couch, *behind* Jesus, to administer the tokens of her regard by washing and anointing his feet. It does not appear that the Pharisee took any public notice of this circumstance—“he spake within himself;” but our Lord, reading his thoughts as readily as they could have been embodied by language, answered the secret workings of his mind, by the parable to which your attention is now directed; and made an application of it which must have been most mortifying to his pride.

The leading features of this parable being the

same with those of the former,—the Creditor the same—the debt the same, differing indeed in degree, but alike out of the reach of human ability to discharge,—and the free remission of it the same,—it appears necessary only distinctly to mark the leading sentiment of the parable, with which we shall close the Lecture; and which is, *that in proportion to our sense of obligation to God for the pardon of our sins, will be our love to him.* Some have imagined that this expression, “He frankly forgave them both,” opposes the doctrine of the atonement. Our plan only allows us here to defend Scripture doctrines as we pass along; the object being rather to produce than support them. It is therefore sufficient to observe, that in whatever way infinite Wisdom chose the debt to be discharged, that discharge came free and full to us, and we contributed nothing towards it. It is also necessary to observe, that this woman was pardoned, not because of her attachment to Christ, but she loved because she was first pardoned: “Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; *for, or therefore,* she loved much.” And where the affections take no part in religion, the sense of obligation to the object of worship must be low indeed. Cold and calculating professors may brand warm affections with the opprobrious epithet of enthusiasm; but they are vindicated by Him whose approbation is alone

worth seeking ; and they are enkindled by a corresponding flame in the heart of the Redeemer himself. When men are indifferent to the honour of God ; cold in the service of religion ; slothful in fulfilling its obligations ; excited with difficulty to support, with their property, talents, and countenance, the cause of the Redeemer ; careless of the perishing souls of immortals ; formal in their observances ; tenacious of trifles ; censorious in their spirits ; unforgiving in their tempers ;—they love little ; they afford reason to fear that they are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. But for us, who owed ten thousand thousand talents, who had nothing to pay,—to whom he forgave all,—every principle of duty, gratitude, and love, requires *us* to consecrate wholly to his service all our powers and possessions, and to seek diligently occasions of shewing our attachment to Him who died for us. Tenderness to each other, forbearance towards the world, zeal in the cause of religion, and unfeigned love to God, are the fruits of obedience which he requires, and which he has enforced by an indispensable obligation, when he taught us even to pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

LECTURE VII.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

LUKE X. 29.

And who is my neighbour?

THE perfection of human wisdom is, to weigh consequences. This may be done wisely, or unwisely; according to the principle by which our conclusion is influenced. If, in our decisions, we leave our resources out of the calculation, the sum total must be erroneous; and we may purpose advantage to others, and defeat our own plan by a total neglect of our own interests. If, on the contrary, we regard exclusively our own advantage, every generous feeling will subside into selfishness; and we shall acquire nothing that is noble, because we can achieve nothing that is disinterested. The first class of ill calculators embrace the free and generous, whose feelings are rather subject to the impulse of the passions than to the domination of reason: the last comprise those worthless spirits who not only are useless to society, but encumbrances upon it;—they are not merely not fit to rule, they are not fit to live. A common nature

calls for common sympathies; and if these are carried too far, we must forgive an error which arises from an excess of generosity. But what apology can be found for those, who, secluding themselves from society, and repelling all the appeals of nature, reason, and religion, live to themselves alone? If such characters there be, (and such there are!) they are not men, but monsters.

To guard us against every description of thoughtlessness, our Divine Master has stated several supposititious cases, which will be found to bear upon the circumstances of real life, and the duties which arise necessarily out of them. He has taught us to weigh consequences, in regard to our *responsibility*, that we may be prepared to decide upon what terms we shall be willing, as accountable creatures, to meet the Infinite. “Agree with thy adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing*.” The leading points of this similitude are as plain as they are momentous. Adverting to the common legal forms of the day, we are

* Mat.V. 25, 26.

reminded, that God is our *adversary*; and *that*, as a creditor, he requires either payment or acknowledgment: his justice must be satisfied, or his mercy implored; and his righteous indignation appeased by submission. The claim is made out with irresistible perspicuity; and it remains to decide what plan we will adopt in so palpable an emergency. The debt cannot be denied; its aggravations justify the severest measures; and the question turns altogether upon what is practicable in circumstances so desperate. The admonition supposes that there is a scheme of *conciliation*;—and it is of importance to understand its principles, and to avail ourselves of its terms. “We, then, are “ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be “ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to “be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be “made the righteousness of God in him.” Here, while the entreaty is earnest, the means are detailed. A double imputation is produced: a guiltless substitute is accounted guilty for our sakes, that the penalties due to us might be sustained by him; and as he was unquestionably innocent, on no other principle could he have suffered. His obedience is imputed to us, that thus we might be wholly justified—accounted righteous, and righteous to the full extent of the divine law, being made perfect in Him; while

personal obedience follows necessarily, as the effect of a divine influence, termed sanctification, and as the spontaneous tribute of gratitude and love to such a Saviour. In the statements of the scheme of redemption, whether figurative or literal, there is a perfect agreement of principle.

No time is to be lost in seeking reconciliation with God: it must be done "*quickly*, whiles thou art in the way with him." All the promises of religion are conditional, both as to terms and as to time. He that will be saved, must consent to be saved in the way which God has ordained and revealed; and must listen to the warning voice, "Now is the accepted time: behold! now is the day of salvation:"—it must be *now*, or it may be never. The most melancholy spectacle which can be presented in this miserable world, is that of an immortal being trifling with infinite concerns, until the die is cast, and his destiny fixed; always having salvation within his reach, and spurning the everlasting blessing—until an unexpected stroke descends, and, in terminating his earthly career at an unforeseen moment, destroys his hope for ever. For this is the conclusion to which our attention is directed. When the law is put in force, the prisoner cannot be liberated until its requisitions are met; and this is, indeed, to represent him *ransomless*. Is it not just that the "uttermost farthing" should be exacted from

those who refuse such a Saviour? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" It is the aggravation of future misery, that while the man falls self-destroyed, the victim of his own negligence, he is fully sensible, in his ruin, of the grace which he despised.

While this similitude teaches us to weigh consequences as to our personal responsibility, two other figures are elsewhere* employed, to induce us to consider them in connection with our *religious profession*. "For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish! Or, what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So, likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." The occasion of this figurative

* Luke xiv. 28—33.

address appears to have been the flowing together of multitudes to hear him, and the zeal which they manifested for his cause. As men are usually wrought upon by a consideration of their present interests, there was but too much reason to fear that the major part of these considered his kingdom as of this world, and hoped to share the emoluments which their imagination attached to it's establishment. Too generous to allow them to indulge this self-delusion, our Lord points out to them, explicitly, the character of his reign among men as purely spiritual,—and the losses and privations to which those must submit who would attach themselves to his cause, from the hostility which it must encounter from existing principalities. To have the honour of laying the foundation of his eternal empire, was to hazard their lives, to relinquish their good name, to sacrifice their property, to wear a distinction of ignominy, and to be harassed by incessant persecution. He demands, whether they have “counted the cost?” whether they are prepared for evils so certain and so tremendous? whether they are “able to drink of his cup, and to be baptized with his baptism?” whether they are willing to bear his cross, and to follow him through evil report and through good report?

The *conclusion* of these parables goes directly to this point; and suggests subjects of awful

consideration to professors of the present day. Although the profession of christianity does not now involve in it martyrdom, or the loss of all things, it requires a relinquishment of the world, of it's attachments, and pursuits,—a decision of character, which, without the presumption that sets at defiance human opinions, or the pride that despises, or the ignorance that undervalues, or the folly that overlooks them, will enable the man to hold “the even tenour of his way,” in the midst of opposition, misrepresentation, misconception, and calumny,—“committing himself to God, as to a faithful Creator.” Are we prepared for such results? and have we calculated deliberately upon them? “Whosoever he be of you”—it is the language of Jesus himself—“that forsaketh not all that he hath”—reputation, friends, ease, emolument, applause,—or holds not himself prepared for this, and submits not cheerfully to privation, slander, hostility, contempt, unkindness, with ten thousand nameless ills, less obvious than overwhelming,—“he cannot be my disciple.” The principle of evil, works differently in the present day, in opposing christianity; but it is not less hostile or active in itself.

The *images* selected by our Lord, are such as accord with the representations of the christian life abounding in the scriptures, and such as best describe it's nature and duties. The apostles,

in their sermons, seem to have adopted these, as best illustrating the important graces of self-denial, circumspection, holy courage, and spiritual activity, which they felt it necessary, frequently and powerfully, to inculcate. Did they wish to pourtray the appearance which the christian as an individual, or the Church as a body, should exhibit to the world?—they described a temple of the Holy Ghost, composed of living stones, rising in defiance of hostility, under the hand of God himself, until the top-stone should be brought forth amidst the acclamations of the armies of heaven. Did they design to exhibit the duties and trials of the divine life?—they called it a warfare: they exhorted believers to “take unto themselves the whole armour of God, that they might be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.” They described the “helmet of salvation,”—“the breast-plate of righteousness,”—“the girdle of truth,”—“the shield of faith,”—“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,”—and the “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,” ready to go or to rest, to press forward or to stand firm, as it’s principles and spirit prescribed.

The *features* of each of these images display some important truths. In the “*tower*”—a character is to be built up, for which materials must be prepared; and we must derive these materials

from God. This character must be consistent, otherwise the beauty of the building and its preparations are lost;—must be progressive, advancing according to the magnificent design, and from day to day;—must be strong, as well as beautiful, fitting as a palace for the Deity, and able to bear the siege of its adversaries. In the “war,” a great disproportion is stated between the contending powers;—the question to be decided is, “Whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand.” And, in truth, there was no comparison between the numbers and natural talents of the apostles, and the mighty prejudices, the incalculable multitudes, the secular powers, and the philosophical antagonists, with whom they had to contend. Nor are the resources of the christian, of an external or personal kind, at all equal to his duties, or commensurate with the strength and wiles of his adversaries. It is most evident that Jesus intended to shew them that the warfare which they undertook could not be supported at their own charge, nor successful in their own energy. Thus, while these figures excite the mind to a serious examination of the labours and perils attached to the christian course, they include, by implication, the grace which it needs, and the source from which it is to be derived. The grand object is, manifestly, that

we should maturely deliberate upon a course which involves so many difficulties, both as to it's duties, discouragements, and resources; and that our attachment to christianity should be rational, decided, and firm,—proceeding upon a thorough acquaintance with it's claims and obligations, lest circumstances of affliction should surprise and dismay us, and we should injure and abandon the cause which we profess to serve and to maintain.

Connected with these similitudes is another, which denotes the *essential qualities of the christian character*, and their importance to the world: “Ye are the salt of the earth;”—ye preserve the whole mass from putrefaction. Such christians *are*, and such professors of religion *ought* to be. “Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savour, where—
“with shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for
“the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it
“out:”—it ministers nothing even to the meanest purposes of utility; nay, salt destroys vegetation: and if that which was intended to preserve other things becomes in itself worthless, by what means can it be recovered? To us the image is interesting: but to them it must have been much more so, from the connection of salt with religious and civil observances. Salt was to be used in the sacrifices which were offered; probably as implying a covenant between God and man, from which salt

was inseparable. The covenant of God with David and his house, he calls "a covenant of salt*:" probably to intimate its firmness and durability, from the preserving qualities of salt;—implying a sure, sincere, and perpetual covenant: for salt is yet employed in the East to denote the confirmation of any engagement; and he who eats bread and salt with another, is pledged to the execution of whatever he promises at the moment in which he adopts this significant rite: it is a vow of inviolable friendship, which no man, even of the highest rank, who had the least regard to his character, and to public opinion, or to sacred obligations, would dare to break. The expression 'To eat the prince's salt,' is equivalent with receiving maintenance from him: and as our Lord marked the baseness of the treachery of Judas, in that he dipped in the dish with him;—as David complains, "He that did eat of my bread hath lifted up his heel against me;"—the same aggravation of traitorous actions would still be expressed by an Eastern monarch, that the criminal had eaten of his salt†. Still further, the administration of an oath is connected with salt: it is not necessary that there should be an officer for that purpose; any person may do it: and the method is, to place a little salt on the blade of a scymeter, which the person sworn receives into his mouth,

* 2 Chron. xiii. 5.

† Harmer. Parkhurst. Editor of Calmet, in his Fragments.

and swallows, using an imprecation which implies a wish that the salt may cause his death, if he decides contrary to his judgment, and to the truth*. It is easy to conceive how expressive would be the use of this figure to those who were not merely acquainted with the general properties of salt, but accustomed to see it employed on religious and judicial occasions, and for the most momentous purposes. The reference in this passage is probably to "the salt dug from the salt lakes, the upper crust of which, having been exposed to the sun, rain, and wind, for a long time, loses it's relish,"—"appearing externally like salt, but possessing none of the properties of that mineral†." At all events, the sentiment is important;—Christian qualities alone are to be prized: and a profession without them is utterly worthless. Those who make it, are injurious to society in proportion as they impose upon them "a form of godliness without it's power;"—and will be finally rejected, when the Redeemer shall distinguish between hypocrites and his faithful followers.

Turning from these detached images, we must now engage your attention upon the parable which forms the principal subject of discussion this evening,—

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

* Asiatic Researches, vol. iv. p. 79.

† Scripture Illustrated, p. 197.

The circumstances attending it were briefly these. An expounder of the law, who had probably heard our Lord's public discourses, resolved to try the extent of his knowledge; and proposed to him the most important of all questions, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" It was the more interesting from the shape in which he put it,—as a personal inquiry. Whether the motives of the proposition were those of malice, of curiosity, or of conscience, it is not possible, perhaps, satisfactorily to determine. Whatever they were, Jesus answered him with his usual simplicity and promptitude. He sent him at once to the perfect rule of right and wrong, with which also he ought to have an extensive personal acquaintance—the Divine law; and asked, "How readest thou?" "And he" "answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy" "God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul," "and with all thy strength, and with all thy" "mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he" "said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this" "do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to" "justify himself," by shifting the application of the precept, or perplexing it's object, and thus rendering it difficult of accomplishment, "said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" The answer to this inquiry produced the parable,—and the question itself at once determines the bearing of the argument. "And Jesus, answering,

“ said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem
“ to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which
“ stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him,
“ and departed, leaving him half dead. And by
“ chance there came down a certain priest that
“ way : and when he saw him, he passed by on
“ the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he
“ was at the place, came and looked on him, and
“ passed by on the other side. But a certain
“ Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he
“ was : and when he saw him, he had compassion
“ on him, And went to him, and bound up his
“ wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him
“ on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and
“ took care of him. And on the morrow when
“ he departed, he took out two pence, and gave
“ them to the host, and said unto him, Take care
“ of him ; and whatsoever thou spendest more,
“ when I come again I will repay thee. Which
“ now of these three, thinkest thou, was neigh-
“ bour unto him that fell among the thieves ?
“ And he said, He that shewed mercy on him.
“ Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou
“ likewise *.”

The sentiment of this touching narrative is, *the cultivation of a spirit of active benevolence, without party restrictions.* Religious benevolence is of an

* Luke x. 30—37.

active character ; it considers every man as our neighbour, whose circumstances require our assistance : and, in return, by whomsoever the benefit is conferred, that person, of whatsoever country or profession, should be considered, by the recipient of his beneficence, as acting a neighbour's part, and sustaining his sacred character. This is the more pointedly marked in the parable ; both because it answered distinctly the question which gave rise to it, and because such a conclusion combated the narrow and bigoted principles of the Jewish teachers. In commenting upon the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," they except all Gentiles ; allowing those only to be their neighbours who were of their own nation and religion†. On this ground, they would not put to death an Israelite for slaying a Gentile ; although they did not justify such an act as lawful, unless they were at war with them : but if a Gentile was exposed to death, they felt no obligation to save his life. Against this unnatural and inhuman principle, which it is not improbable this lawyer intended to apply to his own obedience to this moral precept, did Jesus direct the force of his affecting recital.

He draws a picture of misery sufficiently touching, one should conclude, to reach every

† Dr. Lightfoot.

heart,—a traveller, wounded, naked, and expiring. Who could stay to examine of what country he was, and what name distinguished him? Was it not a brother's blood which flowed from his wounds,—a brother's voice which complained in his meanings,—a brother's life which hung trembling on the lips, ready to depart? It seems difficult to conceive it possible for any man to be so brutal, as, beholding the image of God in the countenance of another, to mar and destroy that image by the hand of violence; to be so far forgetful of what is due to humanity, or so hardened against it, as to shed innocent blood. Alas! the conviction is forced upon us, against our better feelings, by the laws which society is compelled to enact for its own preservation; and by the multitude of those wretched beings who render themselves amenable to that retributive justice which requires, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." To gaze upon acts of outrage, and of unprovoked cruelty, forces an assent to the melancholy, but undeniable doctrine of human depravity. But while we trace the truth in the effect, our Divine Master leads at once to the principle, and, in following evil to its hidden source, fixes upon the human heart as its fountain: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." These,

which constitute the blackest crimes in practice, lie in their seeds, covered in the bosom of the most moral and most-esteemed among men. They are not suffered to germinate : but who has not felt them in his secret passions? Anger is the germ of murder ; lust, of unblushing sensuality ; covetousness, of theft ; a desire to conceal the excellence of another from ourselves or from the world, of false witness ; unbelief, and hard thoughts of God, of blasphemy. How little encouragement of circumstances do these principles of evil need, to call them into action, and level us with those, at whose cruelty and grossness we now shudder ! We must *hate* the character of the sons of violence ; but we ought also to *fear* it.

Two of the ministers of religion, the one filling a higher, the other a subordinate station in the temple, approach the wounded traveller. As Jews, they were bound by their own law, even upon its narrowest interpretation, to relieve him ;—as men, they could need no other impulse than the small still voice of humanity within them ;—but as ministers, they had surely learned “ what this meaneth,—I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” In their ordination to the sanctuary service, their appointment proceeded on the supposition that they “ could have compassion on the ignorant, and “ on them that are out of the way ; for that they

“ themselves also were compassed with infirmity :” and if so much is drawn upon their patience, diligence, and forbearance, by so strong a personal motive, it was not to be imagined that they should be defective in deeds of mercy and charity. The heralds of the love of God to man—the expositors of his law of kindness—the dispensers of his benevolence—they must have imbibed the spirit of precepts which they urged upon others from his word ; and have aspired towards a resemblance, at least, to Him who is the “ God of the spirits of all men.” If there had been in these minds any natural asperity or insensibility, they must have been removed by those offices of charity and kindness in which they were, by profession, occupied in public. “ The waters wear the stones ;” even the marble at length receives the impression of the droppings incessantly distilling upon it. Can human hearts be harder, or more insensible to pity, whose operation is as soft and more precious than that of the shower of the Spring ?

“ The quality of mercy is not strain’d :

“ It droppeth like the gentle-dew from heaven,

“ Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed :

“ It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.

“ ’Tis mightiest in the mightiest : it becomes

“ The throned monarch better than his crown :

“ His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,

“ The attribute to awe and majesty,

“Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings :—

“But mercy is above this sceptred sway :

“It is enthroned in the heart of kings ;

“It is an attribute to God himself :

“And earthly power doth then shew likest God’s,

“When mercy seasons justice.”——

And if mercy is the most sublime attribute of majesty, surely sympathy must be the most graceful quality of the priesthood. The interchange between Jericho and Jerusalem was, from their official arrangements, very frequent ; and it seemed well for the poor traveller that such a calamity befel him upon a road which characters so sacred were constantly passing and repassing. As these ministers of the God of love approached, if the wounded man was sensible, he would know them by their robes ; and what hopes of succour would be awakened by the solemn and well-known dress ! But, one by one, they both abandoned him, unpitied, unaided at least, to his sufferings ! The priest at once passed on, hurrying from affliction which he would not relieve,—passed by on the other side, willing perhaps it should be thought that he had overlooked this sight of woe. The Levite approached, and lingered, and looked ; nor could he look without compassion ;—but the pity is worthless which evaporates in sentimental expressions of sympathy, or is extinguished in silent inactivity. He also “passed by on the other side.”

After some more hours of anguish—and in sickness and pain, oh, how slowly does time appear to pass away!—"a certain Samaritan" drew near; and succour arose from a quarter the most unexpected. Had this Samaritan been disposed to counteract the meltings of pity, he had every excuse within his reach that could at least extenuate neglect of the injured traveller. He was of another country; of a people between whom and the wounded man's countrymen there was not only no intercourse, but an irreconcilable hatred. They were, by nation, natural enemies. O unnatural word! pernicious effects of indulged passions! when a line of separation formed by a wood, a river, a channel of the sea, a chain of mountains, a fenced city, shall so wholly divide men, as to suffer them to forget that they are brethren, or furnish them with a pretext to consider and to treat each other as enemies! He could himself have expected no kindness, under similar circumstances, from a Jew. He was not, like the priest and the Levite, passing from town to town in an official character, and a daily course, where either was an equally advantageous resting-place, and duty was divided between them; but he was upon a journey. All these considerations yielded, and at once, to the spontaneous impulses of compassion. And his pity was not of the inactive sort, which satisfied itself with looking

upon him, and sighing over him; "Be ye warmed, and be ye clothed:" the sympathy which filled his heart, impelled his hand, and decided his conduct. With a promptitude inseparable from genuine feeling, "he went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." He removed him with tenderness "upon his own beast," "brought him to an inn," nursed him as a brother, and, laying aside all other concerns of business or enjoyment that day, "took care of him." The compassion which saved him from death by the way, would not desert him to perish at his temporary asylum. Eastern inns do no more than afford the traveller a shelter; the rooms being altogether unfurnished; the way-faring man brings his own mattress, his own provisions;—and this poor man had been plundered of all. When therefore the Samaritan departed, he consigned his charge to the host; left two-pence (about fifteen-pence of our money,—a sum which, in those times, would have amply repaid the labourer for bearing the heat and burden of two days) as a provision for his immediate necessities; and pledged himself to return, and discharge whatever expenditure might be subsequently incurred; while he recommended the sufferer to his best care and tenderness. "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" Was it not "he that shewed mercy upon him?" And even such a friend, it

has been well and frequently remarked, was Jesus to us. When wounded, naked, and ready to perish, he succoured, relieved, and saved us. From all our guilt and misery he redeemed us; and will never forsake us, till he has brought us safely home. Even such an example of tender mercy, and of active compassion, did he set, in the labours of his life. He went about doing good, comforting the broken-hearted, healing all manner of diseases, recovering the sick, and consoling the mourner: sorrow never met his eye unpitied, nor left his presence unrelieved. He stayed not to inquire after the country or profession of the sufferers; it was enough that they stood in need of assistance. He was prompt to save them; and exercised his power and compassion, even in the agonies of death, when no eye pitied, and no hand relieved *him*. He is still “a merciful and “faithful High Priest. Let us, therefore, come “boldly to the throne of grace, that we may “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time “of need.”

The improvement remains:—“Go thou, and do likewise.” And as the application equally belongs to us, with the person to whom the parable was addressed, having shewn what acts of mercy constitute a neighbour’s duty and character, some may be disposed to ask, “And who is *my* neighbour?” Look around you upon mankind; and in the extensive scenes of misery every where pre-

senting themselves, you may easily find proper objects for your beneficence. Wherever the widow requires consolation, and the needy support,—wherever you find the naked to be clothed, the hungry to be fed, the prisoner to be ransomed, the ignorant to be instructed, the perishing to be saved,—there is your neighbour: in him behold your own nature; in him relieve and cherish your own flesh. And he is an unfaithful servant who does not in such cases consider himself a steward for God: he is negligent of his Lord's precept, who does not feel it to be “more blessed to give than to receive:” he is unworthy the name of a man, who will not retrench his personal expensiture, so far as possible, to shake the superfluity to the sons and daughters of misery: he is a stranger to true nobility, who is not ambitious that the “blessing of him that is ready to perish may come upon him.” “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” “Let brotherly love continue.” “Be the children of your Father who is in heaven;”—“merciful as he is merciful;”—“for he causeth his sun to shine upon the evil and the good; he sendeth his rain upon the just and upon the unjust.”—“Go, and do likewise;”—imitate his liberality; distribute his bounty; aspire to his example;—receive his approbation.

And here the Lecture might close, so far as individual duty is concerned. But there is an obligation of a national character binding upon us in our collective capacity. Great Britain has a debt to the providence of God, which she is required to pay to the world. Her unrivalled religious advantages demand from her the sacrifice of the littleness of human policy. As an empire, she must shape her politics to the circumstances of the times, and the conduct of other countries; but as *Christian* Britain, the ark of the world, the depository of Divine truth, she must consider every country, even those which may be politically at war with her, as her neighbour. Her Missionary and Bible Societies, her noble projects of civilization and education, must “know no man after the flesh,” nor any nation as locally and politically circumstanced. Without sacrificing any of her rights as a nation; without stooping to the foot of a proud conqueror—an ignominy from which her happy position and her high principles are alike the pledge of deliverance, she has a general duty to fulfil, an universal benefit to confer: and she will not have done her duty to God, herself, or her neighbour, if she relax her noble efforts for the diffusion of useful and religious knowledge, while one spot of the habitable globe remains unilluminated by the beams of Truth, and unsubdued to the empire of the Redeemer.

LECTURE VIII.

THE RICH WORLDLING.

LUKE XII. 21.

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

THE right management of wealth is one of the most difficult attainments in the course of moral duty. Dangers encompass the possessors of it, in every stage of it's acquisition and enjoyment. It has been often and reasonably remarked, that the probable cause of the poverty of the best characters, is a merciful withdrawment, on the part of the Giver of all good, of the temptations attached to prosperous circumstances, as an evidence of his paternal consideration and regard; and it is most certain that the superior qualities of those characters were produced and perfected by adversity. To the furnace of affliction the pure gold of religious graces owes it's refinement and it's lustre. It is also evident, that many characters, irreproachable in adversity, have become worthless and criminal in prosperity; and that the best of men

have exhibited their greatest failings under easy or flattering circumstances. It ought not, on this account, to be concluded, that abundance is an evidence of Divine disapprobation : for some of the most eminently pious have been among the rich and the great ;—some have exceeded in wealth, and others have occupied thrones. The ruler's staff was in the hand of Samuel ; the power of government at the disposal of Daniel ; the crown of Israel on the head of David ; the affluence of the East in the possession of Job. Yet “ not many wise men after
“ the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble,
“ are called ;”—and why ? because there is a tendency in the splendour, wealth, and power of this world, acting upon the depraved passions, and the corrupt nature of man, to seduce the mind from God, and to centre the affections in themselves. Also, the poor were preferred in the original dissemination of religious truth, to prove that the gospel neither owed it's success to human agency, nor could be resisted effectually by human power. This is the reason assigned by St. Paul, for the fact, that few distinguished personages were found among the early friends of christianity. “ But God hath
“ chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak
“ things of the world, to confound the things which
“ are mighty ; and base things of the world, and
“ things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea

“and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; *that no flesh should glory in his presence.*” This great reason, assigned for the thinness of the ranks of the illustrious for birth or possessions in the army of Christ when the banner of his cross was first erected, has not even yet ceased: but the seduction of pleasure, “the deceitfulness of riches,” and the pride of power, acting upon the depravity of the human heart, are occasions but too evident for the comparative paucity of the great, and the noble, and the wealthy, among the friends of religion. As wealth and power, distinction and science, are not tokens of reprobation; neither are poverty and affliction evidences of approval and security,—because these are unhappily found, not unfrequently, separated from submission and piety.

The just conclusion from the disparity of human circumstances is that which Solomon deduced: “For all this I considered in my heart, even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.” We can never judge safely of the character of the individual from his situation in life. Yet it cannot be denied, that character is frequently deeply affected by circumstances: and those which stand

connected with affluence have often a most injurious and pernicious tendency. There is danger in the acquisition of wealth, lest it should be pursued too eagerly, and by means too grasping, if not absolutely dishonourable—debasing the nobler faculties of the mind, and destroying it's better feelings: danger in it's possession, lest it should be lavished with a criminal prodigality, or hoarded with sinful anxiety,—lest it should be employed to gratify individual selfishness, rather than promote the public benefit,—lest it should endear the present to us too much, and conceal from us the future. Therefore the rich are addressed by many admonitions; and the temptations of a state of prosperous affluence frequently and distinctly enumerated in the scriptures. Many of our Lord's parables turn upon these points; and among them, that which is to occupy principally our present attention, stands conspicuous.

This is, perhaps, the proper place in which to notice a parable not distinctly named in the scheme of these Lectures, but which, from it's importance, cannot be altogether omitted,—the parable of THE UNJUST STEWARD. It is the object of this course of instruction to embrace, so far as is practicable, the whole series of this method of teaching adopted by our Lord: accordingly, some considerable portion of every Discourse is devoted to the consideration of minor and detached similitudes and

parables;—the title of the Lecture being taken from the leading object of it's research. Sometimes a contrast is attempted between the preliminary subject and the parable principally discussed;—at others, proximity of position point out the preparatory disquisition;—at others, the choice of the introductory remarks on different figurative expressions in the sermons of Christ is determined by analogy. This remark is made for the purpose of shewing, that these detached figures, the explanation of which occupies the place of an exordium to the principal subject, fall distinctly within the plan marked out for this series of exposition. And the parable of the Unjust Steward appears to claim it's place here, because it relates to an attachment to worldly interest; differing indeed from the spirit condemned in the leading subject of the evening, but no less injurious and censurable; and was produced to illustrate a sentiment of equal importance. The general principle in both allegories appears to lie against COVETOUSNESS: but each advanced it's own sentiments. * “There was a certain rich man
“which had a steward; and the same was
“accused unto him that he had wasted his
“goods. And he called him, and said unto
“him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an

* Luke xvii. 1—14.

“ account of thy stewardship ; for thou mayest be
“ no longer steward. Then the steward said
“ within himself, What shall I do, for my lord
“ taketh away from me the stewardship ? I
“ cannot dig ; to beg I am ashamed. I am re-
“ solved what to do, that, when I am put out of
“ the stewardship, they may receive me into their
“ houses. So he called every one of his lord’s
“ debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How
“ much owest thou unto my lord ? And he said,
“ An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto
“ him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and
“ write fifty. Then said he to another, And how
“ much owest thou ? And he said, An hundred
“ measures of wheat. And he said unto him,
“ Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the
“ lord commended the unjust steward, because he
“ had done wisely : for the children of this world
“ are in their generations wiser than the children
“ of light. And I say unto you, Make to your-
“ selves friends of the mammon of unrighteous-
“ ness ; that, when ye fail, they may receive you
“ into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful
“ in that which is least, is faithful also in much :
“ and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also
“ in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful
“ in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit
“ to your trust the true riches ? And if ye have
“ not been faithful in that which is another man’s,

“who shall give you that which is your own? No
“servant can serve two masters: for either he
“will hate the one, and love the other; or else he
“will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye
“cannot serve God and mammon. And the
“Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all
“these things: and they derided him.”

There are difficulties attending this singular parable, some of which may be removed by a reference to Eastern customs; others, although capable of a general and satisfactory elucidation, must, I fear, as to certain expressions, remain; at least, I have never been able wholly to satisfy myself as to their exact import. The general sentiment of this parable is, that *worldly spirits are better instructed as to their interests, and more prompt to secure them, than religious professors, or even christians themselves*;—“for the
“children of this world are, in their generation,
“wiser than the children of light.”

The *crime* with which this man was charged, was that of wasting his master's goods;—either neglecting to dispose of his merchandise to the best advantage, or appropriating to his own use that which was the property of his lord. To understand how this injustice might be effected, it is necessary to advert to a singular practice in the East*, of hiring a confidential servant on the con-

* Aaron Hill's Travels, p. 77.

dition that, in place of regular wages, he shall receive the advantage of *one-tenth* of the profit which can be made in the management of their business. The effect of this agreement is, that the servant is ever upon the watch to make the best advantage of his master's concerns, by securing to himself as much as he possibly can,—the master is compelled to have a strict eye upon the servant, that he should not exceed the stipulated grant. Such a method of remuneration affords an undue temptation, on the part of the agent, to defraud both his superior, and those with whom he has mercantile transactions. This practice further pointed out to him the means of supporting himself, in the event of his dismissal from office. He seemed to be perfectly aware that his conduct would not endure inspection; and that when inquiries were once instituted, he could no longer hold his situation. His master appears also to have been perfectly convinced of his dishonesty, by dispensing with his further services at the moment when he required his settlement. In winding up the account, he seems both to have afforded an advantage to the debtors, to secure their good will, and to have reserved to himself a profit beyond that which was legal in itself, and stipulated by such agreements. The Gentoo laws allow to the servant of a merchant, where no wages are distinctly agreed upon, *one-tenth* of

the profit;—to a herdsman, *one-tenth* of the milk;—to a husbandman, *one-tenth* of the crop. “If he plough the ground, receiving victuals, *one-fifth* of the crop;—if he receive no victuals, *one-third*.” This practice will explain a singular observation which our Lord deduces from it—singular, according to our habits and conceptions: “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much:”—he that can be depended upon in the smallest concerns of business, and is honest in the most inconsiderable calculations, may be implicitly trusted; for many would shrink from dishonesty on a large scale, who make no conscience of petty frauds. This sentiment is as intelligible as it is just, in connection with the customs of every country: “And he that is unjust in the least, is unjust,”—is surely not to be trusted, “in much.” If therefore ye have not been “faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”—if ye have misapplied the wealth (called unrighteous, because the source, in its abuse, of so many evils) with which Providence entrusted you, how can you expect to be favoured with the gifts of his Spirit, and the consolations of religion? But it is added, “If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s,

“who shall give you that which is your own?” The clear interpretation of this expression must be derived from the custom which we have already named: and then it will import, if ye have been dishonest in the administration of the property confided to you by your principal, how can ye expect that share of it which the law appropriated to you *as your own*, and which you might have demanded, if you had been found faithful?

The *difficulty* seems to lie in two points: First, “The Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.” It has been inferred, that Jesus lent his sanction to fraud, by his approval of that which he stated distinctly as an act of fraud. Such a conclusion is not justified by the expression, even supposing that it is intended of Christ: it would imply no more than that he approved the end which the steward proposed, in securing his own interest, but could not be fairly extended to a justification of the means. All that he inferred by his own statement was, that christians ought to be stimulated to secure an eternal good proposed to them, by legitimate means,—when the world are alive to their advantage, and resolutely bent upon securing and extending it, by all means, just or unjust. No more could be intended, than that we should take the good, and refuse the evil;—imitate their zeal, penetration, and industry, but avoid their corrupt

and abominable practices. But there is no conclusive reason to apply the commendation to our Lord: the term may, and I think clearly does, refer to the master of the steward; who, although justly irritated at his dishonesty, could not but admire his ingenuity, in indemnifying himself, according to the practice of the country, for his services, when he had reason to conclude that he should lose the wages which his evil conduct had forfeited,—and in doing this in a way in which detection was least likely, for which also he could advance some plea of custom, and which would procure him friends among those of his lord's debtors whom he had favoured at the same moment that he remunerated himself. That he should take more than his legal share, is perfectly consistent with his character. The second branch of the difficulty is in the application of this circumstance: "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Without enumerating the several conjectures which have been hazarded on this obscure passage, I will apply to it the interpretation which appears to me most consistent with its expressions and its context; without assuming, however, that I am exclusively or unquestionably right in the exposition. I understand the exhortation,—‘ So distribute the *riches* with

which God has entrusted you—and which are to most persons the occasions of so much sin—by relieving the necessitous and comforting the afflicted, that these, which are snares to so many, may *befriend* you, may minister to your comfort, usefulness, and piety; that when ye die, when your heart and flesh *fail*, *they* whom you have consoled and sustained, and whose happy spirits have gone before you,—and holy angels, who are themselves appointed to “minister to the heirs of salvation,” and who delight in deeds of mercy and charity,—and, above all, God your master, to whom you are accountable, as stewards of his property, may congratulate your arrival into everlasting habitations, and welcome you home to your perfect and eternal rest.’ Mammon is a Syriac word, signifying *riches*, or *gain*. The *unrighteous* mammon may be well rendered *unfaithful riches*; alluding not merely to the occasions of evil which they furnish, but to the uncertain tenure on which we hold them,—they deceive those who place dependance upon them, by gliding unexpectedly away. It is evident that our Lord intends a lesson against covetousness; therefore he brings the wealth and possessions of time into contact with the solemn hour of death,—when *we* fail, and must resign all that we hold in this world. In justification of this interpretation of the passage, I will only produce a corresponding

exhortation on the part of St. Paul*: “Charge
“ them that are rich in this world, that they be
“ not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches,
“ but in the living God, who giveth us richly all
“ things to enjoy ; That they do good, that they
“ be rich in good works, ready to distribute,
“ willing to communicate ; Laying up in store for
“ themselves a good foundation against the time
“ to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

Here, as it appears to me, the same sentiment is expressed in language stripped of figures : and in both cases it is evident that nothing of merit is intended to be attached to our obedience ; but God rewards men according to their works—although not on account of them : He fits us for that glory which we cannot purchase ; and announces our meetness for it. Divine principles will always produce benevolent effects, and induce the christian to make such an use of this world as God approves. And because he approves it, he will express that approbation at the great day of judgment ; and consider that which was done in his name, for his servants, for his cause, for his sake, as done to himself,—and, of his free mercy, reward it accordingly.

I must yet detain you, to examine a little more closely the leading *sentiment* of this parable ; That

* 1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

“the children of this world,” justly so called, because they live exclusively to it’s interests, and are guided altogether by it’s spirit, “are wiser, in their generation,” in their general actions and pursuits, “than the children of light :”—those who have renounced evil, have received religious instruction, and are aspiring to a world of perfect knowledge and bliss. We are surpassed by mere men of business and pleasure, in zeal, activity, and penetration. The man of this world is resolute to secure it’s advantages—quick to discover where they lie—prompt to adopt measures which may advance them—undefatigable in labouring for them. He is never off his guard—never weary of accumulation—never indifferent on the exchange of merchandise. He does not consider six days too much to serve his family. He will not fail well to examine the title to an estate which he purchases. He will always avail himself of the auspicious moment, to sell or to buy to the greatest advantage. But for us, who profess to have upon our hands concerns of such infinite importance, and before us a prize of such infinite value—we cover practical indifference with a profusion of profession—we find it difficult to keep our spirits active, and our feelings alive, *one* day in seven—we are not occupied and wholly intent in our thoughts upon the one thing needful, as are those upon what they deem the main chance—we are not

quick to discern and prompt to improve our advantages—we suffer many a golden opportunity to slip, which we can never recover. We may deplore the object of the “children of this world;” but we must admire their activity, and stand reprobated by their ardour. For what do *they* toil?—for “riches, which make to themselves wings, and fly away, as eagles towards heaven,”—for “things which perish in the using,”—for empty titles and vain distinctions,—for possessions, held on the uncertain tenure of life, and inevitably wrested from them by death: and *we* labour for a celestial crown—an eternal good—an unchangeable inheritance—the fruition of God himself, and are foiled by the zeal and energy of the aspirers after such mean and perishing goods as thee. “To us belong shame and confusion of face.” While we must plead guilty to the charge, let us mourn over our lukewarmness and folly.

You will not consider the exposition of this parable as merely preliminary to the subject announced for discussion this evening, but as a constituent part of it: I have therefore entered more fully into its detail than I should otherwise have done. In both parables, the uncertainty of riches is exhibited; in both, the use and abuse of the world are implied; in both, avarice is arraigned. The spirit of the world is indeed alluded to, in

the one case to stimulate, in the other to caution;—in both it's object is condemned. Each, therefore, has its sentiment, each has circumstances corresponding with the other; and there is a common point in which they meet—the censure of covetousness. For observe the close of the parable of the unjust steward. “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. And the Pharisees also, *who were covetous*, derided him.” Connect this with the opening of the parable of

THE RICH WORLDLING.

And he said unto them, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose

“ shall those things be, which thou hast provided ?
“ So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and
“ is not rich towards God*.

Having shewn the connection of these parables, as meeting in a common point, and pronouncing a common censure against covetousness, it is necessary to state the occasion, as leading to the primary sentiment of this awful representation. The *occasion* was afforded by the solicitation of one of his hearers, that he would decide a legal question between himself and his brother, and command the division of a disputed inheritance. Whether the right was on the part of the complainant, does not appear : but the refusal of our Lord to judge in such a case, was consistent with his declaration—
“ My kingdom is not of this world.” The energy with which he even reproved the solicitation which he rejected,—and the application which he immediately made of the circumstance to caution his hearers against covetousness—when followed up by an illustration so solemn as the parable which he grounded upon it,—would seem to induce the conclusion, that he discovered in the disposition of this man, not a love of justice, or a sense of injury, but the spirit which he abhorred, and the vice which he intended to condemn. The sentiment is, *The folly, guilt, and danger, of setting the affections upon*

* Luke xii. 15—21.

this world, and neglecting everlasting concerns: in his own words, "Laying up treasure for ourselves — and not being rich towards God." To feel this sentiment, it behoves us to examine this character in all it's bearings.

Look at his *circumstances*: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully."—It is well known, that much of the wealth of that day, and of that particular country, consisted in land and cattle. Princes were long enriched by the soil over which they ruled; and their family did not disdain to cultivate the arts of husbandry. Refinement, luxury, and commerce, opened new sources of wealth, and gave a new direction to manners and morals,—not of a better character. While the man drew his supplies from the field, the process of vegetation, or the multiplication of his stock to which he looked for support, placed before him, in defiance of his indifference, in a striking point of view, the wonder-working hand of God; but when his wealth arose from mercantile interchange, and a fictitious medium of circulation, he was cast more upon his own industry and ingenuity, as it would appear to him, and was led further in his reflections from the Author of all good. The facilities, however, thus afforded to meet the wants and to promote the interests of society, proved *that* to be of general benefit which might minister to individual disad-

vantage. And it is evident, that, to a mind pre-occupied with the world, the voice of nature speaks frequently in vain ; while the artificial sources of wealth, opened by modern usages, cannot rob God of his honour, in the heart of a good man. Through whatever channels his prosperity may flow, he will consider the providence of God as it's fountain.

The circumstances of the individual proposed are stated to have been those of the most ample affluence. He seems to have had large possessions—to have already amassed considerable wealth—to have been favoured with increasing plenty. It is unnecessary to repeat the sentiments already expressed on the subject of external prosperity or affliction ; but it may be proper to remark, that such a person as the character supposed is commonly an object of envy, especially to the lower classes of society. “ The heart knoweth it's own bitterness :” every one feeling the pressure of his individual exercises, deems his own lot inferior to that of his neighbour. Those who suffer the pangs of want, the insults of oppression, the weakness and misery of indigence, conclude no evil so great as that of poverty. Sensible only of the splendour and imposing influence of affluence, and painfully alive to their own penury, they overlook the ills attached to the station they covet ; and the contrast of conditions renders the obvious advantages of the one more attractive—the substantial evils of the other more oppressive.

Look, then, at his *anxieties* : “ He thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room to bestow my fruits ?” His riches were not only not divested of care, but became the occasion of trouble. What if these evils were imaginary in themselves ? To him they were real. They disturbed his rest, they occupied his thoughts ; they tied down his heaven-born spirit to the world, and excluded the desire and the pursuit of eternal objects. What more, or worse, can the severest penury inflict ? They had not conferred upon him happiness, for they brought not with them content. Possession increased desire, — accumulation produced incumbrance. “ A man’s life ” — the excellence of it, the comfort of it, the end of it — “ consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” The secret of happiness lies in the heart ; the bosom-spring of joy supplies the rills of external consolation. This was the treasure which Jesus gave his disciples, as his parting legacy, when he promised, “ Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” The world gives abundance, without enjoyment ; — Jesus gives peace in the midst of alarms. It is possible to be rich in the depth of poverty. This St. Paul discovered, in his own experience ; and manifested, in the temper of his mind. “ I have learned,” he said, “ in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know

“both how to be abased, and I know how to
“abound,”—the last attainment is even more difficult than the first: “every-where, and in all things,
“I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry,
“both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all
“things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
And there is a poverty in the midst of riches;—
under this evil, the man, whose example is cited,
pined, surrounded by unbounded affluence.

No object in the creation is so pitiable as a poor rich man, without the heart to distribute, and without the power to enjoy!—“What shall I do?”—was it necessary to inquire, when so many were suffering want around him? If the wealth, which it troubled him to hoard, had been scattered, it would have eased his cares, and have returned fraught with the blessings of those who were ready to perish. He would have been richer for his liberality; for the benediction of God would have sanctified that which remained; and he would have felt that he had sufficient—a satisfaction never tasted by the covetous. “There is no end to their labour”—their eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor their hand with grasping. With a desire as enlarged as the grave, they never say, It is enough!

Look at his *projects*.—And he said, “This
“will I do: I will pull down my barns, and
“build greater; and there will I bestow all my

“fruits and my goods.” These were secret projects—“he thought within himself.” And is the heart of man so narrowly watched by Him “who understandeth our thoughts afar off,” that there is not a hidden purpose, not a floating conception, not a half-formed imagination, but it is arrested by his omniscience, sentenced at his tribunal, and written in his book—the book which shall be opened and read at the general judgment? “What manner of persons ought we to be!”

These were vain projects. To decrease his cares, he multiplies the sources of them. Already in possession of enough to torment, he lays his plans for the increase and accommodation of his stores. When the conscience of the sensualist haunts him, his resource is to plunge deeper into the vortex of dissipation; and to purchase a momentary oblivion, at the certain expense of increased guilt and misery. When the anxieties of the covetous are augmented, they feed the fuel which consumes them, and render heavier the burdens which already press them to the earth. The love of the world, too, often increases with its perplexities; and, like a desperate gamester, its votaries treble the stake with ruin before their eyes.

These were selfish projects. Still, his own ease, his own distinction, his own importance, alone occupied his attention. Incapable of one generous sentiment, he calls none to share that which he

could not himself enjoy. He has no associate in his pleasures and his pains. All his thoughts, wishes, schemes, hopes, and fears, centre in himself. "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years—eat, drink, and be merry." The worldling has no friends. The miser finds no kindred spirit: he shrinks from his own resemblance in another; and, conscious of his own principles, fears to be betrayed, overreached, and plundered. The selfish man can share no pleasures, for he knows no sympathy.

Look at his *presumption*. This is visible in every part of his design, in every thought of his heart.

In his estimation of property—"my fruits, my goods, my barns"—he feels no gratitude for bounty, he shews no consciousness of dependence. He never asked himself, whose rain descended upon the field; whose sun, whose air, and whose hand, wrought the secret process of vegetation. Appropriation gives a charm to all the possessions of life: a sensation of peculiar pleasure plays around the heart; when the man can look around him, and say, *This is mine!*—every field, every tree, every flower, has a new charm. But this is a pleasure which a sense of dependence upon God, and a spirit of gratitude towards him, will increase and perfect; and without these, it is criminal and transient. Nor let the poor christian, who has not

so much land as to set his foot on, which, according to the usage of this world, he can call his own, be discouraged: he can lift his eyes to the sun, moon, and stars, and say, "My Father made them all:" he can stretch his arms towards the heaven of heavens, and say, "There is my inheritance." And a voice is heard from the most excellent Glory, ratifying his claim, and saying, "All things are yours."

In the formation of his plans, his presumption appears. "This *will* I do: I *will* pull down my barns, and build greater."—"Go to, now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas, ye know not what shall be on the morrow: For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*."

His presumption appears, further, in the extent of his calculations,—"*Years*," "*many years*," years of undiminished health and prosperity. He never reflected that sickness might invade his

* James, iv. 13---17.

constitution; that accident might destroy his stores; or that violence might wrest from him his possessions. No man has a right to calculate upon unshaken health and comfort, even if life be prolonged to him. Years will bring infirmities; and the days of darkness are many. We cannot safely calculate upon to-morrow; still less, surely, upon "many years." Yet every man is, to a certain extent, such a vain, and irrational, and presumptuous speculator. Still less did he anticipate the sentence which hung over him.

Look at his *punishment*. "But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then, whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"—Death is always terrible; terrible even to the christian, when the fears of futurity disappear, and the valley is lighted up by the beams of immortality. Nature dreads the mortal foe, dreads the last conflict; and however expected the stroke may have been, it surprises at last. Death to a rich man has terrors peculiar to his circumstances, his habits of life, his modes of thinking. Affliction sanctified prepares for the tomb; but the summons is terrible to him who is at ease in his possessions—who has much to lose, and frequently little to hope. Even such a spirit might be weaned from time and life, by suffering.—How often the afflicted are reconciled to the change by endurance! How often the heart

is made soft by pain, and prepared for the reception of the truths of the gospel, against which it was once closed. God makes the dying bed the birth-place of the spirit.—But here it is sudden death—a removal irresistible, and at once, from health, affluence, and ease—a dissolution, terrible as it was unforeseen and unprovided for—a summons to the tribunal, of a worldly man with all his imperfections on his head, and all his presumptuous schemes quick within him. It was a death whose horrors were heightened by the consideration of it as a mark of divine displeasure. It is avowedly a punishment. The soul is required, for which he had made no provision. An account of his possessions is demanded, of which he had made so ill an use. O! if it were to be said, to any one of us, by the same prevailing voice, “*This night thy soul shall be required of thee,*” whose face would not turn pale? whose heart would not tremble? who has not unrepented sins to confess? unfinished plans to execute? holy resolutions postponed to a future and distant day? a long account to settle? a balance of fearful moment to be struck?—And if the issue were safe, the manner of the summons would be still awful. How justly is such a character charged with folly! In the possession of every advantage for cultivating the mind, distributing consolation to others, securing his own interests, one vile passion absorbed

every feeling, and extinguished every generous principle,—the love of the world, the love of money, as centring in itself all that was desirable in time, and worth living for, in his estimation. What folly was that which could thus *rest upon the present*—so transient, so unsatisfying, so mingled with evil, as every man finds it—as even *he* must have felt, in some sad solemn moments! What folly was that which could *overlook the future*, with all its destinies, pressed upon his reflections by the consideration of mortality, which finds its way to the conscience of the most dissipated, often in their gayest hours! What folly to *banish such reflections*; to postpone to a remote period, and when the powers of nature should fail, concerns of infinite consequence, and to sacrifice them to the schemes of a flattering hope which were never realized!—He calculated ill, or repelled reflection altogether. He stands to all ages a monument of judgment, a beacon of admonition, a pillar of wrath; upon which is inscribed,—and let the worldly and the covetous draw near and read the sentence;—
“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the
“whole world, and lose his own soul? or what
“shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

But he stands not alone. The history of mankind is replete with such melancholy examples—examples of time mis-spent, talents abused, eternity neglected. “So is *every one* that layeth up

treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." Thousands have been impelled by the same folly; to rear the same baseless fabric, to see it struck by the whirlwind, and to perish in its ruins. Will nothing awaken the careless to a sense of their guilt and danger? Must the whole frame of nature be dissolved, and the tribunal actually be set, the books opened, and the Judge rouse himself in his seat of majesty, before they will believe and tremble? Will they wait till the stroke of mortality descends upon themselves in a moment, before they shake off the day-dreams of a distempered fancy, and awake to the awful realities of an impending eternity? It comes—the inevitable period of present existence hastens on. So far as we are individually concerned, "the end of all things is at hand." The power which arrested this unthinking trifler in the midst of his career, is addressing every lover of this world,—is addressing *us*. It is the voice of resolution, but it is the voice of friendship also: "*Thus will I do unto thee: and because I will do thus unto thee, Prepare to meet thy God!*"

LECTURE IX.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

MATT. XXIV. 32.

Now learn a parable of the Fig-tree.

WE are again sent abroad into the walks of nature, to gather from her vegetative process religious instruction. The creation is the temple of God, no less than the sanctuary. There the prayer may be offered, and the anthem raised;—the spirit be informed, and the Deity worshipped. The patriarch went out into the field at even-tide to meditate: and he who would converse with heaven in the silent tranquillity of contemplation, must retreat from the crowded city, with its cares and its noise, into the quiet country, where every blade of grass, every wild flower, every leaf, is replete with admonition or consolation. When the scriptures are about to convey religious information, they take their disciple by the hand, and say, “Let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender

“grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth.” The volume of nature, and that of inspiration, were written by the same hand. They exhibit the same characters of majesty and benevolence. They alternately disclose the same features of splendour and obscurity: they mutually develop each other. The scriptures form a delightful exposition of nature; while, with correspondent harmony, the visible creation sometimes affords a copious and luminous commentary upon the bible.

The illustrations deduced from vegetation are numerous and striking. Some of these have been already produced in a former Lecture; and others no less important remain. They present a beautiful coincidence with the leading topic of this evening; and, although they cannot be largely detailed, must not be wholly passed over in silence. These are distinguished, as are all our Lord's parables, by much point in expression, much interest in respect of the subject to be elucidated, and much force in their respective applications. Take an example*.—“And he said, So is the kingdom
“of God, as if a man should cast seed into the
“ground; and should sleep, and rise night and
“day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he
“knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth
“fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear,

* Mark iv. 26—29.

“after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Here is the *secresy of divine operation*. It is impossible for the gospel not to produce some effect; and that effect shall be precisely what God intended: “For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void: but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” The same sentiment is here advanced, under the image of vegetation itself. Human agency is, to cast the seed into the ground—not to determine what shall be it’s produce: and when at length the effect appears, it’s cause is concealed; “it springs and grows he knoweth not how,”—his labours have been rendered successful by a mightier agency than his own; and though these were painful and laborious, occupying his daily exertions and his nightly cogitations—though these also were necessary, because prescribed—the event is dependent exclusively upon the divine benediction, as it is wrought alone by divine power: nor can he point out the exact way in which it was promoted and secured. Here is also a process

which illustrates *the progression of religious principle*,—"first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." All is not attained at once. We advance in knowledge, experience, and holiness. We are to cultivate the graces of the Spirit, by employing the means of religious improvement; and the power which communicated, is pledged to sustain, to increase, and to multiply them. To be satisfied, in our examination of ourselves, with the attainments of the last year, is coolly and criminally to relinquish all the influence of present advantages, which ought neither to be less prized, nor less productive. Here is further, *the gathering home of the christian to his eternal rest*. "When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the "harvest is come." The graces of the christian character are growing up to perfection—a perfection attainable only in the future world, towards which, however, they are continually advancing. Heaven is but the consummation of that work which the Spirit of God now commences in the hearts of his people. No new principles are implanted in the world of bliss; but those which are *now* imparted, are *then* perfected. Holiness there becomes perfection; it is the same principle matured: it is called grace in the bud, the full blossom is glory. And when, by instruction, by affliction, by the various methods of Providence and of

discipline, the graces of the character are ripened, saints are gathered home. Death is to them an easy transition to heaven. Their departure is without violence, and without terror. They "go down into their grave in a good old age; like a shock of corn fully ripe."

A conclusion of this mortal scene far different awaits a different class of character, the illustration of which is not dissimilar. "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up*." The persons alluded to are supposed to have *advantages*—they were planted. A weed is a spontaneous production. A plant implies ground chosen and prepared for its reception, care employed to nurture it, its vegetation and growth diligently superintended. These have been brought into the church, by local position, by ministerial diligence, by parental tenderness: they have the benefit of religious instruction, but they do not profit by their advantages. To be found in the church, is not sufficient to decide the character: those alone are safe, who are brought there by the agency of the Holy Spirit. These are distinguished by their religious character and consistency. And the distinction shall be rendered universally visible in the issue; when the christian indeed shall be transplanted to a soil

* Mat. xv. 13.

more congenial to his nature ; and the mere professor, torn from the plantation which he encumbers, shall be cast forth to perish.

God is, in effect, called the *husbandman* : and, in perfect conformity to this representation, the Psalmist writes, " Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing : To shew that the Lord is upright : he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." A different statement is indeed made : but in both cases, the necessity of his superintendence, the wisdom of his discrimination, and the justice of his decision, are exhibited.

It is not possible to leave this figure without adverting to another beautiful similitude employed by our Lord, established upon the same position : " I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away : and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit*." This allegory contains all the substance of the two which precede it : inasmuch as it points out the miserable end of professors of religion, whose external conformity to the observances of religion constitutes

* John xv. 1, 2.

the whole of their just pretensions ; and at the same time establishes the promise of security attached to the unassuming and unaffected character of the christian. But it has a significant and momentous import of its own,—that the fruitfulness of the christian arises from *a real union* with Christ ; and that the barrenness of the professor, notwithstanding his arrogant and imposing pretensions, is to be accounted for on the principle that he is wholly a stranger to such a vital connection. To take this image in the sense in which the apostle Paul has employed it, we must call it “ingrafting:” for although he employs this term relative to the Gentiles admitted into the privileges which the Jewish church had forfeited, and thus applied it to a body rather than to individuals, it is no less true that every real christian is extracted “from the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and grafted” into this “tree of life.” In one word, the grand sentiment to be inferred from this image is expressed in our Lord’s own application of it: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. *I am the vine, ye are the branches :* he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing.”

In the same train of illustration the parable of

our Lord presents itself, which says, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry*?" The allusion appears to be to an ancient expedient of setting fire to the root of a tree, and feeding it with fuel until the tree fell: and an illustrious traveller†, whose production of customs from Abyssinia, novel and strange to us, subjected his veracity to many insulting comments, but who has been since confirmed in most of his leading representations by subsequent evidences, states, that whole forests, with their underwood and vegetation, are thus consumed. It is evident, that while the living tree, with all its foliage and juices—the vital lymph circulating through every channel, would yield slowly to the influence of the fire, the blasted and dead trunk would fall under its power without resistance. The application of this expressive image is made by the apostle Peter: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?"

Following the same order of nature, we always expect every thing to be produced after its kind. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, and figs of

* Luke xxiii. 31.

† Mr. Bruce.

thistles†?" was the inquiry of Jesus, when he was demonstrating character from it's influence. And St. James employed a similar image, when he asked, "Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine, figs?" Such a circumstance would be as contrary to the ordinary course, as to the original constitution of nature; the primary law of which, by which it has ever been regulated, was, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth : and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding fruit after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind : and God saw that it was good." Thus were characters to be distinguished by their conduct. And as the plant was distinguished from another by it's production ; so one tree, of the same name, of the same appearance, might be known from another by the value or the worthlessness of it's fruit. It is not every fruit-bearing tree that produces useful or acceptable fruit. This is but extending the sentiment a little beyond absolute barrenness : and it is done by our Lord, in the context of the last-quoted passage, when he says, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; but a corrupt

† Mat. vii. 16.

“ tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot
“ bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree
“ bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth
“ not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into
“ the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know
“ them*.” He applies this imagery distinctly to
professors, who are either destitute of any religious
character, or whose spirit and temper do not coincide
with the character and precepts of the gospel. To
be totally devoid of energy is not worse than to
employ our activity in a way which is inconsistent
with the prescriptions of religion. In truth, it
will eventually be found, that while many will be
excluded from heaven on account of what they have
omitted, not fewer will forfeit that blissful state
by what they have done.

To wind up these scattered similitudes with an
image which applies to them all, and which brings
us nearer our immediate object, the forerunner of
Jesus has remarked, “ Now also the axe is laid
“ unto the root of the trees ; therefore every tree
“ which bringeth not forth good fruit”—not *fruit*
merely, but *good fruit*—“ is hewn down, and cast
“ into the fire†.” It is required of every pro-
fessor that he should not only act, but act con-
sistently. A dreadful consummation of the present
life is before him ; and the sentence is—a character

* Matt. vii. 17—20. † Ib. iii. 10.

conformed to the precepts and spirit of religion, or everlasting ruin! The danger is imminent—for the judgment impends. No time is to be lost. The axe is not only sharpened, but brought to the spot, laid at the root of the offending plant, and waits only the agent to employ the ready instrument. This is the very point to which we were desirous of leading your attention, as it necessarily introduces and powerfully enforces the subject of this evening—proceeding upon the same principles, through similar imagery, to the same conclusion. “Now learn a parable of the fig-tree.”—“A certain man had
“a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came
“and sought fruit thereon, and found none.
“Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard,
“Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit
“on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down;
“why cumbereth it the ground? And he answer-
“ing said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year
“also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And
“if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that
“thou shalt cut it down†.”

The *fig-tree* is frequently employed, in preference to others, to elucidate religious subjects, when these borrow their illustrations from the process of vegetation. The advance of the spring into

† Luke xiii. 6—9.

summer is marked by the fig-tree; and our Lord, therefore, enforces the observance of those signs which were to precede the destruction of Jerusalem by this familiar image. "When his branch "is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know "that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye "shall see all these things, know that it is near, "even at the doors*." It is evident, from the frequent selection of this tree for purposes of elucidation, that it was common in the East; Jesus preferring the ordinary productions of nature to expound his meaning, because those were constantly within the reach of the multitude, and incessantly reminded his hearers of the truths which they were employed to explain and establish. And it appears that there was a species of the fig-tree, a sort of sycamore—and sometimes so translated in the gospels—which grows by the way-side; and was the subject of a miracle performed by our Lord. As this miracle was a *sign* of the very same truths which are conveyed to us in this *parable*, and as such types were often to be considered as allegories addressed to the eye, it shall be noticed in this place. "And on the morrow, when they were "come from Bethany, he was hungry: And seeing "a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if

* Matt. xxiv. 32, 33.

“haply he might find any thing thereon: and
“when he came to it, he found nothing but
“leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And
“Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit
“of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples
“heard it. . . . And in the morning, as they passed
“by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.†.”

—While obviously the guilt of unfruitfulness is punished alike in the miracle and in the parable, it seems necessary to notice this singular circumstance; both because it has some obscurity in itself, and because scepticism has availed itself of this, either to deny the miracle, or to arraign the justice of the sentence pronounced against the tree. The difficulty lies in the expression, “the time of figs was not yet:” how, then, could the Saviour expect to find them? and why did he curse the tree for not finding that which it was out of the course of nature to produce? It has been answered, that the passage may well be rendered, “the fig-season was not yet”—the harvest—the time for gathering them in: therefore, if this tree had not been barren, the fruit would have been certainly upon it, because the general period of stripping the trees was not come. This would be perfectly satisfactory, if it were not the fact, that the fig-tree ordinarily ripens at a much more advanced period

† Mark xi. 12—14. and 20.

than is here supposed. This event took place about March; whereas our Lord himself states the putting forth of the green leaf of this tree as the signal of the approach of summer. The general fig-trees, in their maturity, fluctuate between the close of April and the middle of June. But there is a species of this tree, commonly called the "mulberry-leaved,"—well known in Egypt, and planted by the way-side, inferior in quality to the other fig-trees, which are therefore more diligently cultivated, but constituting the food of the common people,—“which is always green, and bears “fruit several times in the year, without ob-
“serving any certain seasons*,”—a difference of two months being common in these trees, between each other. This was manifestly the tree approached by our Lord, from it's position by the way-side; and “he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon;” because it had no certain season, and because it was green when the choicer fig-tree had not yet budded. Some of these kind of fig-trees bear fruit as frequently as seven times in the year. Is it necessary to add, that this tree standing by the way-side, as a common hedge-tree, was not private property; therefore, when our Lord caused it to wither for purposes of public instruction, he inflicted no personal injury?

* See Norden's Travels in Egypt, vol. i. p. 79.

Having shewn the analogy of this miracle with the present subject, which alone induced us to examine it's circumstances, it is necessary now to refer to the *occasion* on which the parable of

THE BARREN FIG-TREE

was spoken. By a correct attention to the connection of the respective parables, we best learn their leading sentiments : and it ought to be our first object, in every instance, to discover what our Lord intended by the images which he employed, and not to apply our ingenuity to a whimsical, although plausible use of them†. “ There were
“ present at that season some that told him of the
“ Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with
“ their sacrifices. And Jesus answering, said unto
“ them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were
“ sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things ? I tell you, Nay : but except ye
“ repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those
“ eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell,
“ and slew them, think ye that they were sinners
“ above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem ? I tell
“ you, Nay ; but except ye repent, ye shall all
“ likewise perish.”

The generous mind of Jesus Christ corrects the sentiments which these people seemed to entertain, that such awful and unusual providences were

† Luke: xiii. 1—5.

to be considered as judgments. This opinion appeared to be a prevailing superstition among the Jews; for, on one occasion, "as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth." And his disciples asked him, saying, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" In this instance, also, the mild and merciful Redeemer repelled the bigoted insinuation, and answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Not that he was guiltless, or his parents; but that he was not visited with his blindness on account of sin: but it was ordained as an occasion to the working of one of those miracles of compassion which so often graced the life of Jesus Christ. The event which was announced to our Lord, was a display of that tyranny which is to be feared and expected from a government like that of Pilate, who acknowledged no law but his passions, and subordinated justice to caprice. The second incident, narrated by Jesus himself, is one instance of those inscrutable dispensations of Divine Providence, which will never be unravelled until that day when God shall unfold his own mysterious designs. The first, originating in human caprice, might be more rationally considered martyrdom than execution; for they died sacrificing, and possibly for conscience-sake; for it is the act of a

tyrant to usurp dominion over conscience. The second elucidates that principle, of which, because of our propensity to judge others, we cannot be too frequently reminded,—that we cannot determine men's sins by their calamities. From both, an important inference is drawn: “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” To establish the necessity of repentance, this parable is spoken, discovering the disproportion between the graces of the best characters, and the advantages which they have enjoyed,—the total absence of religion in many professors, amidst the most extensive means of religious improvement; and presenting, as its leading sentiment, *the guilt and danger of possessing religious advantages, without exhibiting a corresponding character of purity and activity.*

“He spake also this parable: A certain man had “a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came “and sought fruit thereon, and found none.” *The fig-tree* was probably intended more immediately to expose the Jewish nation, who, in the enjoyment of so many distinguished spiritual blessings, had proved so utterly worthless. Accordingly, by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah*, he represented the guilt and ingratitude of this people, upon whom he had conferred so many privileges, under a corresponding image. “Now will I sing to my

* Isaiah V. 1—7.

“well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his
“vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a
“very fruitful hill : And he fenced it, and gathered
“out the stones thereof, and planted it with the
“choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it,
“and also made a wine-press therein : and he looked
“that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought
“forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of
“Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you,
“betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have
“been done more to my vineyard, that I have not
“done in it ? wherefore, when I looked that it
“should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild
“grapes ? And now, go to ; I will tell you what I
“will do to my vineyard : I will take away the
“hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up : and
“break down the wall thereof, and it shall be
“trodden down. And I will lay it waste : it shall
“not be pruned nor digged ; but there shall come
“up briers and thorns : I will also command the
“clouds, that they rain no rain upon it. For the
“vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of
“Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant :
“and he looked for judgment, but behold oppres-
“sion ; for righteousness, but behold a cry.”—But,
however pointed this parable was against the peo-
ple to whom it was addressed, its truths and its
admonitions are universal. The professor in every
age, whose fruitless life bears no resemblance to

his ample privileges, is this barren fig-tree. And until the experiment can be actually made, and his character clearly developed, circumstanced as he is, and fair as he appears, he is this tree of promise.

The *vineyard* is the Church.—This was not one of those wild fig-trees which grew, or were carelessly planted, by the road-side ; but one supposed to be of a more generous nature, and tended with corresponding assiduity. The separation of the christian body from the world is naturally suggested by an inclosure ; and the cultivation applied to the garden, or the field, becomes an appropriate image of those superior advantages to be enjoyed in a state of religious communion. Peculiar privileges are attached to church-membership. The ordinary means of grace, the reading the scriptures, and their public exposition—the anthem of general praise—the fervent and universal prayer—the recurrence of these ordinances—all are invaluable, and ought to be influential ;—and to these distinguished privileges every one of my hearers has, or might have, admission.

The *proprietor* is God ;—by Him these ordinances were instituted,—instituted, not as necessary to himself, but as essential to us. From their observance, He can derive no accession of happiness ; from their neglect, no diminution of majesty : but upon our obedience depends our well-being. He has therefore constituted *that* a duty which is

indeed a privilege, to add to it the force of obligation: He constrains us, if I may so speak, to our own interest. From him all the means of religious improvement are derived: and if they secure the end proposed by them, we owe their success entirely to the agency of his Spirit. To Him, every tribute of love, gratitude, and obedience, is due.

The *expectation* of fruit—is a requisition of christian graces. It is expected, that those who profess to be disciples of Christ, should exhibit his spirit, should exemplify his humility, his forbearance, his devotion, his resignation, his purity, his mild and animated affections, his diligence and activity. And should any be disposed to ask, What fruit does God require? I answer them by referring to the important list of graces which St. Paul has drawn out and enumerated: “The fruit of the Spirit is, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Nor are these all. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

It is a *reasonable* expectation;—for great are our advantages. And is it not just that we should be judged accordingly? When the poor heathen,

“feeling after God, if haply he may find him,” misses his way, who shall dare to condemn him? We leave him in the hands of a Judge as merciful as he is just, and whose wisdom is equal to all his other perfections: but for us, “how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”—and is it not indispensable that we should have our fruit unto holiness, that the end may be everlasting life?

It is a solemn *scrutiny* which the Deity makes. He *comes* and *seeks* for fruit;—and what can escape the penetration of his glance? He is not deceived by the profusion of foliage. He asks not buds and blossoms,—but fruit. He values not the homage of the lip, nor the splendour of profession: neither can these cover a spirit of levity, and a heart attached to this world. He knows every man exactly as he is; he will judge him accordingly, and expose him finally. His *disappointment* was great;—for he found *none*. If professors are not what they ought to be, it might at least be expected that they should be better than others. If the tree could not be deemed productive, it might be concluded that it would bear *something*. But how frequently do we find more amiable qualities, more attractive tempers, more conciliating manners, on the part of men who advance no pretensions to religion, than we can discover in many of those who constantly frequent our sanctuaries? The disappointment is common. The King of

Zion visits her solemn assemblies, and turns with disgust from the mockery of dissimulation which he detects. "Who hath required this at *your* hand, that ye should tread my courts?" is His language, as he frowns upon the sacrifice of the sensual, the worldly, and the hypocrite.

"Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, 'Behold! these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'"—However necessary the introduction of this second personage may be, to preserve the harmony and integrity of the image, it is no less useful to the subject, and important to us, who can be at no loss to whom we should apply this interesting character. If ministers of religion, charged with the superintendence of the church, deserve this title, it can be applied to them only in a subordinate sense, and in its full import, must belong exclusively to Jesus Christ. In whom besides can be found such incessant labour for our advantage, such tender regard to our interests, such patient forbearance with our worthlessness, such interposing mercy to secure us from impending ruin? It is therefore called *his* church, because he presides in the solemn assemblies;—because he purchased it with his own blood. It is called *his* vineyard, because he himself keeps it with constant vigilance, and "waters it every moment." The ordinances of religion are

to it as the sun, the air, the dew, the rain, to the field;—and these all were established by his command, and derive their efficacy from his mighty power.

The sentence is *just*. It passes to the Dresser of the vineyard: because “the Father judgeth no man, “but hath committed all judgment to the Son:— “that all men should honour the Son, even as “they honour the Father.”

It proceeds on the clearest *principles*. Why should a plant so worthless be spared? What could be expected from further indulgence? Long forbearance had already been exercised. The proprietor had come, not one season merely, but three years—three successive years; bearing disappointment with matchless patience, until to endure seemed no longer useful or desirable. For the tree was not only unprofitable in itself, but injurious in it's influence. It cumbered the ground; it occupied the place of something better; it spread it's barren but leafy branches over the soil; and blighted, by it's shadow, neighbouring, unpretending, more lowly, more useful plants. Such is every professor. Without bringing any glory to God, without conferring any benefit upon others, without affording any advantage to the Church of Christ, he is absolutely and extensively injurious. His positive character is worse than his negative: the one is but the absence of good;

the other is the fatal presence and pernicious influence of evil. He ruins by his example—desecrates the most sacred services by his unhallowed passions—seduces by the frivolity and levity of his temper—occasions the holy name of God to be blasphemed, and his good cause to be slandered, by his high pretensions, and his inconsistent, unstable character. And shall not God require for these things? Shall he not be avenged of such a false friend, such a real enemy, as this?

The sentence is *imperative*: it seems to forbid all appeal—to preclude all hope:—"Cut it down." Who will interpose when the wrath of Deity is kindled? Who will stand between the porch and the altar, weeping for those who weep not for themselves;—and crying, Spare thy people, O Lord! and give not over thy heritage to ruin?" Ministers, whose duty it is to occupy this awful position at a moment so fearful, may well shrink back with dismay. Behold the Dresser of the vineyard stands forth,—He who had been most injured, because all his toils had been unrepaired,—He, to whom the execution of the sentence was committed, and to whose hand the axe was consigned.

"And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it." It was a *powerful* plea: he speaks as one who felt a near interest in the endangered

plant. He pleads for it as for an object dear to his heart;—as Lot pleaded for Zoar—as Moses pleaded for Israel—as a father pleads for the life of his child—still with more energy than these, and as He alone can plead. Here again appears the propriety of this application of the office and title of Dresser, to our Lord. For “if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.”

Therefore His plea is so *tender*—connected with so many purposes of mercy—with a reduplication of religious means—with renewed and more fervent appeals to the heart and conscience—with advantages still more extensive; so that the finally impenitent are without excuse, and the world shall perceive how obstinately bent they were upon their own ruin.

Therefore is His intercession so *prevalent*.—We conclude that he succeeded, because the sentence is not repeated. How far the interposition was availing, as to the plant itself, is left in awful uncertainty—to stir up our gracious fears, and excite solemn self-examination. We know the mediation of Jesus Christ to be prevailing; and we have enjoyed the benefit of it, in the prolongation of our lives from year to year.

It is only a *reprieve*,—not a pardon. The sentence is suspended, not recalled. The intercession

itself is conditional; and should the object of it fail, mercy itself confirms the decision of justice. "If it bear fruit, well: and if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down." It could not be otherwise; the ends of justice must not be defeated or evaded. God justifies the ungodly, only in a way consistent with his justice:—and whom he justifies he sanctifies; they are "conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren;" they become, like Him, "holy, harmless, undefiled," at least they are gradually advancing to this perfect and future state; and are now "separate from sinners"—they adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour "in all things."

Consider, therefore, the prolongation of your life, and health, and talents, as a reprieve—a further trial made of you, a further opportunity of salvation afforded you. And oh! remember—aggravated guilt calls for *severer punishment* at last. If indeed you employ the boon which compassion solicited and mercy bestowed, only to enhance your offences, and nurture your insensibility, you only give the storm time to rise in all its collective fury;—and when it shall beat upon you at last, whither can you flee for shelter?

It is time that we should make the *application* of these things to ourselves. We have trifled but too long with our privileges—presumed too much upon the Divine forbearance—occupied a place and

LECTURE X.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

MATT. XXII. 14.

For many are called, but few are chosen,

WHEN the sages of antiquity employed the parabolic method of instruction, they proposed to their disciples various subjects of importance and utility, under the images which they selected. These were sometimes philosophical principles, acting upon intellectual powers, and unfolding to the inquiring spirit the hidden causes of nature—the mysterious sources of those astonishing effects, which, while they meet every eye, are left unexamined by the multitude, and, after all his labour, escape the researches of the man of science. They did not indeed pretend to assign to all these effects their unquestionable cause; because this would have been an assumption so preposterous, as to have exposed the folly and ignorance of the person who could be so weak as to advance it; but they traced the operations of nature so far as they could be followed towards their sources; and conveyed their discoveries to others by figures which tended to elucidate their character, and to impress them upon

the memory. Sometimes *moral* truths, and their inseparable duties, occupied the attention of the benevolent teacher. He exerted himself to discover the springs of moral evil, and to destroy them in their first effusion; to weaken and to regulate the passions; to implant and to cherish just and pure principles; to cultivate every amiable disposition; and to eradicate, or at least restrain, every corrupt propensity;—to employ the active powers of the human mind, and to subject them to the generous influence of education. In attempting to secure these great designs, he frequently borrowed a lesson from nature;—pointed to the fruits of the soil, superintended by vigilance and enriched by labour, producing an hundred-fold; or to “the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding, and lo! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.” This he exhibited as the emblem of the human heart, neglected, left to the dominion of the passions, desolated by sloth and guilt;—and his young and unsophisticated disciple saw, and considered it “well; he looked upon it, and received instruction.” In connection with morals came the *maxims of economy*, so important to the well-being of society, and the happiness of the individual. He was taught to respect the feelings of others—to sympathize in their circumstances and emotions

—to regulate his own conduct—to minister to the prosperity of the state which protected him—to consider himself as a citizen of the world, every man having a brother's claim on his heart, and his country the double obligation of nature and of moral principle—to act well his part as a master, a husband, a friend, a child, or a servant; and to respect and exercise all the domestic charities. These precepts, also, took a parabolic shape: the ant, the bee, the stork, a thousand representatives of the instinctive economy of nature, surrounded him, to impress upon his understanding, his heart, and his memory, the moral principles essential to himself, in their bearings upon the relations and the duties of human life.

In which of these subjects did not Jesus excel? His allegorical teaching, no less than his moral precepts, “was profitable to the life that now is,” as well as to that “which is to come.” He delighted to detail the principles and operations of nature; he pointed out their moral analogies; he applied them to the economy of life;—but he also gave them a direction unknown to Plato or Pythagoras; he shewed by them the golden chain which binds this inferior world fast to the throne of God—he developed by them spiritual and eternal things. As the astronomer forms a tube, and applies it to his eye, to strengthen his vision, and bring nearer to his sight and apprehension the features of distant celestial bodies,—Jesus framed,

of the materials of nature, a telescope, which rendered visible, invisible and eternal things, and discovered to the entranced and admiring spirit the glories of the future and heavenly state. What, though the man sees as yet, through this glass, but darkly?—across its broad and bright disk flit the shadows of his departed friends; the indescribable forms of angels and celestial hierarchies, the insufferable splendours of the eternal throne, and of Him who sitteth thereon, dazzle the mortal vision; and he gazes upon that which is “within the veil” until his powers swell into ecstasy, and he longs for the moment when the material frame shall be dissolved, and he shall see these glorious objects face to face, and know even as he is at present known.

It is a moral precept, bearing upon the economy of human life, and presented in an allegorical shape, arising out of the circumstances in which both himself and his auditors were placed, which introduces the subject proposed for discussion this evening:—that important precept is, *Humility*; a grace as doubly as it is rare; as change as necessary to be urged, as the duty is difficult to practise.—

And he put forth a parable to those which were forbidden, when he marked how they chose out the “chief rooms”; saying unto them, When thou art

“ bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down
“ in the highest room; lest a more honourable
“ man than thou be bidden of him; And he that
“ bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give
“ this man place; and thou begin with shame to
“ take the lowest room. But when thou art
“ bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room;
“ that when he that bade thee cometh, he may
“ say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt
“ thou have worship in the presence of them that
“ sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth
“ himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth
“ himself shall be exalted.”

The occasion of this precept is stated; he observed their anxiety to secure the most honourable places on public occasions; and this, because in the East the arrangement of the guests, especially at a wedding, designated the rank and consequence of each individual. The term “ chief rooms ” appears to imply no more than we have expressed—upper seats; although it can scarcely be doubted that in a feast of this description, and from the mandate issued by the lord of the entertainment in the preceding parable that “ his house should be filled,” every principal apartment was occupied; and these were probably subject, as rooms, to arrangement in point of rank, no less than the principal hall. In ancient times, there were elevated seats or thrones for persons of rank: but the

present usual method of sitting in the East, and which seems to have obtained in our Lord's days, is upon a raised floor, called a *divan**, skirting the room, about three feet in breadth, and two in height, covered with carpets and silken mattresses, or cushions richly embroidered, upon which they *sit cross-legged*; the place of honour being the corner. At table they *recline* upon couches, each still occupying a position according to his rank. From these habits, the ambitious would naturally desire to occupy, if not the seat of honour, a station as near it as possible: and if their aspiring was more ardent than their judgment was correct, or their modesty exercised, they exposed themselves to the danger of being displaced, and to the public disgrace of pretending to rank which they did not possess, while they made way for a superior. Those who entered the banqueting-house early, would of course have an opportunity of placing themselves according to their inclination: but if they did this without a prudent regard to their actual station, as in a large company many persons of the higher order might be supposed to be invited, they would evidently subject themselves to the mortification of being compelled to relinquish their seat to a

* Or *duan*,—described by some travellers as a *sofa*. A council of state is also called a *Divan*, probably from this circumstance—their mode of sitting on such occasions.

“more honourable man.” There was the more point in these observations of our Lord, as he was at that moment in the house of a man of rank among the Pharisees—a prince or a magistrate, and was addressing persons who had been invited to such an entertainment as he supposes, and whom he saw crowding to occupy the first seats at the banquet. This may appear an inconsiderable circumstance to notice and to reprove. But let it be remembered, that from small events the direction of the mind is discovered, and the character developed. Our Lord censures, less the *thing*, which is of little moment, than the disposition which it indicated, and which is of the utmost consequence in a moral point of view. Nothing is trivial which marks the bias of the temper: and while the individual is upon his guard in greater concerns, trifles expose his ruling passion, whether it be pride, ambition, avarice, prodigality, petulance, meanness, or whatever be the governing principle of his mind. This should be remembered by those who watch the infant intellect, and should be conscientiously acted upon: the unguarded moments of childhood, as well as of maturer age, are those which exhibit the true character of the spirit—it’s defects and it’s excellencies—it’s principles and it’s propensities. These were never overlooked by Jesus Christ: and we have a further evidence furnished in the occasion of this and the preceding parable, that he never neglected any

opportunity of imparting religious instruction; nor feared to speak all he thought, in every place, at all times, and before all ranks and descriptions of persons. The courage which he manifested was that of a good conscience; and his manner was such as to offer no violence to the feelings of those whom he addressed. We should be careful, in the smallest things, to cultivate right dispositions;—in things of greater importance they will then be regulated of course: and without either affectation or ostentation, if the mind be properly disciplined, our profiting will appear unto all men, and in the most ordinary concerns. That man is not a christian, who reserves the exercise of his principles for great and public occasions:—they were intended to adorn and influence common life; and they must appear, and be exercised, in every occurrence, and in our daily transactions. Humility is properly a christian grace; because pride is inherent in man from his birth; and it is the invariable tendency of human nature, in all the ranks of life, to aspire to something higher than the sphere which it occupies. If this universal feeling did no more than stimulate to laudable exertion, it would be an incalculable blessing: but it impels the individual to rise, by all means, at every risk, and in absolute defiance of consequences. Thus acting, it renders it's victim at once selfish and criminal; and at length plunges him into disgrace and ruin.

The sentiment, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," is universally just: it is enforced by the most impressive dispensations of providence; it appears in the most ordinary occurrences of human life; it enters into the fundamental principles of the gospel. Men delight in mortifying the arrogant; and God "abaseth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Yet is this grace,—so amiable in itself, so high on the list of christian virtues, so useful to society, so ornamental to the individual,—often considered by the world as the want of proper spirit, and designated by the opprobrious epithet of meanness. We must esteem the decision of God more than human opinion, and act in defiance to worldly maxims, when these are opposed to the precepts of his word, and the spirit of his religion. The most brilliant and ostentatious characters will, another day, seek in vain to veil their heads, and turn to the covert of rocks and mountains in despair: it is then that the grace of humility shall shine forth, when it's possessor shall be called from the crowd, and placed at the right hand of the Judge eternal.

After this lesson of humility applied to the guests, Jesus directed his admonitions to the master of the feast, and instructed him in the principle of *disinterested benevolence*. "Then

“ said he also to him that bade him, When thou
“ makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends,
“ nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy
“ rich neighbours ; lest they also bid thee again,
“ and a recompence be made thee. But when
“ thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed,
“ the lame, the blind : And thou shalt be blessed ;
“ for they cannot recompense thee : for thou shalt
“ be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*.”

It could not be intended that our relatives or our neighbours should be excluded from the social board : but we are instructed to turn our wealth into a channel of utility, rather than of ostentation. Too much of property, even among professors of religion, is wasted in indulgence : too little is appropriated to the alleviation of human misery. At the loaded board, while the wanton expenditure marks alike the pride and the thoughtlessness of the master of the feast, there is often little friendship on the part either of the vain host or of his supercilious guests. To keep up an unmeaning routine of dissipation, flattered with the title of ‘ friendly intercourse,’ or to secure some concealed but interested end, is the object of feasting in general. In the mean while, our brother perishes at the door :—the smallest pittance squandered at the entertainment would save his life, and restore

* Luke xiv 12—14.

him to society; and it is withheld, or bestowed with an unfeeling pride which breaks the heart while it succours the starving frame.—O insolent greatness! know ye not that ye are stewards for God, and that these are the legitimate objects of his bounty? Repel the pride of abundance: distribute with a liberality worthy your rank and means. Remember, benevolence is disinterested; it looks for no return: it is gracious, and accompanied by sympathy. “Call the poor, the lame, and the blind,” and let their hearts bless you. While you supply their necessities, you are preparing a feast for your own mind. “They cannot reward you.” Do you seek a recompence beyond the approbation of your conscience, and the rich conviction of doing good? Receive it in the smile of Deity; and look for it “at the resurrection of the just.”

These remarks of our Lord did not appear to be without effect: for “when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” To eat bread, signifies, according to the idiom of that language, to partake of all its benefits. And as this remark follows immediately the reference of Jesus to the “resurrection of the just,” this man probably intended by “the kingdom of God,” not the gospel dispensation, but the world of eternal bliss. This

remark gave rise to *one* of those parables which are to be produced, to illustrate the subject of this evening : for

THE MARRIAGE FEAST

comprises *two* parables, related by two Evangelists : and it is perhaps difficult to determine whether they be one and the same, narrated with a little variation of circumstances ; or whether they were spoken upon different occasions. However this may appear to different persons, it is evident that their resemblance is so striking, and their object so similar, that it would not be proper to separate them in the discussion of that important subject announced for present consideration. The first of these is contained in the twenty-second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, from the second to the fourteenth verse inclusive. “ The kingdom of heaven is
“ like unto a certain king, which made a marriage
“ for his son, And sent forth his servants to call
“ them that were bidden to the wedding : and
“ they would not come. Again, he sent forth
“ other servants, saying, Tell them which are
“ bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner ;
“ my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all
“ things are ready : come unto the marriage.
“ But they made light of it, and went their ways,
“ one to his farm, another to his merchandise :

“ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways; and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.”

The second is recorded by St. Luke, in the fourteenth chapter of his Gospel, from the sixteenth to the twenty-fourth verse. The occasion of the former parable is not stated; but this is in answer to the serious and interesting remark of one of the guests with whom he was eating, and which has been already noticed. “ Then said he unto him,

“A certain man made a great supper, and bade
“many : And sent his servant at supper-time to
“say to them that were bidden, Come ; for all
“things are now ready. And they all with one
“consent began to make excuse. The first said
“unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and
“I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me
“excused. And another said, I have bought five
“yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray
“thee have me excused. And another said, I
“have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.
“So that servant came, and shewed his lord these
“things. Then the master of the house, being
“angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into
“the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in
“hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt,
“and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it
“is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there
“is room. And the lord said unto the servant,
“Go out into the highways and hedges, and
“compel them to come in, that my house may
“be filled. For I say unto you, that none of
“those men which were bidden shall taste of my
“supper.” It is evident that while these parables
hold in view one object, they are so similar in their
illustrations, that in each we find the same cir-
cumstances, but little varied, and alternately ex-
pounded. Conjointly, they present a most inter-
esting delineation of Divine mercy and of human
folly ; and powerfully enforce the language of the

text, which contains the leading *sentiment* of both parables,—“For many are called, but few are chosen.” *The free and full salvation provided by infinite compassion for the ruined and the lost, is despised or neglected by those to whom it's blessings are offered.* This is the construction which I feel authorised to put upon the text, from the spirit of both the parables. The decisions of God are not arbitrary. His sovereignty is paternal. Infinite goodness is combined with omnipotence. His justice and his mercy are not at variance. All the perfections of his character harmonize, and “God is love.” It is evident that the persons to whom these parables apply, “reject the counsel of God against themselves ;” otherwise the figures cannot agree with the things signified by them. To attempt to fathom the Divine decrees, is as impossible in itself, as it would prove unprofitable to us. The elements of christianity are simple, and it's principles unquestionably beneficent. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself ;”—“and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” Who is listening to his gracious invitations ? Who is willing to accept his salvation ? Who is flying for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before him ? These are the important inquiries suggested by this interesting subject ; and this is the practical use which we should make of it. Let us not seek to be “wise above that which is written.”—“Secret things

“belong to God;—but things which are revealed “to us, and to our children.” And what are these revealed things? They are comprised in one word: “Whosoever will, let him come;”—and, “Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”

This point established, which I deem essential to the faithful exposition of the sentiment, it is necessary to trace the *union* of these parables in fact, that it may be apparent the combination proposed is neither fanciful nor constrained. The Master of the feast, the banquet, the invitation, the excuses, the guests received in place of those who refused the privilege, are all the same. The *first* parable exceeds, in the circumstances of the wedding-garment, the destruction of the rebellious, and the punishment of the individual presuming to appear without the robe of ceremony. The *second* enumerates the various excuses brought by the parties who renounced the invitation. These are the only differences: it is evident that the same object is kept in sight in both cases, while the allegories mutually furnish something to perfect the true and affecting delineation.

Before the general principles are enforced, it is necessary to elucidate them, by an appeal to certain oriental customs upon which the machinery of the parable is founded. The first is the term “*supper*,” as constituting the principal meal of

the day. The Jews, and after them the Romans, divided the day into twelve hours—from six o'clock in the morning until six in the evening: and the night into four watches, commonly distinguished by the equinox from sun-setting until sun-rising; the first of which lasted until nine—the second until twelve—the third, or midnight watch, until three, or cock-crowing—the fourth until six, which was designated, emphatically, the morning watch. In the division of the day, from six until ten in the morning, the Romans held their public audiences, transacted their public business, and paid their formal visits; from ten until four, every man was occupied in his particular pursuit, the great business of his life. Their dinner was a very slight repast, taken about twelve, without formality, and without waste of time: their principal meal, *supper*, took place about four o'clock in the afternoon; after which they seldom applied to business, but enjoyed the society of their friends, or mingled in the public amusements of the country. They retired early. It was the man of literature alone who broke the order of nature. The student has in all ages sacrificed his health, his pleasure, his repose, to the instruction and benefit of an ungrateful world; and fed the midnight lamp, whose trembling radiance illumined his pallid countenance, with the vital fluid drained from his heart.

The manner of *bidding* the guests finds no precedent in modern customs. With us, an invitation is given and accepted, and the matter rests;—the company are expected, as a matter of course. But here it is evidently the practice to announce the feast when it is duly prepared, and individually to remind the invited of their engagement. That the servants should subsequently go forth to call in the public to a participation of that repast which the persons for whom it was originally intended had refused, appears to arise out of the singular circumstances of the case: but, in truth, it is but a part of a well-known and constantly-practised custom of inviting guests to a public entertainment. To this custom Solomon alludes, in a beautiful parable of the accessibility of wisdom to those who are disposed to seek it*! “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts: she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table: She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the high places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.”

The difference appears to be, that subsequently

* Prov. ix. 1—5.

men-servants were employed in place of females : and while persons of the middle rank employed but *one* messenger for this purpose, it is evident, in the royal feast described in the first parable, that *many* were sent on this service ; and probably the number corresponded with the rank of their lord. It seems *yet* to be a custom in Egypt to invite guests to a banquet by sending abroad, for that purpose, female servants, to the amount of ten or twelve, covered with black veils*, preceded and encircled by different male slaves.

The *wedding-garment* alludes to a practice in the East of displaying the wealth of the master of the feast by the provision of a rich and splendid robe for each of his guests. This was especially the case in bridal solemnities, and where royalty was concerned. It ought not to be forgotten, or overlooked, that our Lord describes, in his parable, *royal nuptials*. The highest distinction which a prince of the blood royal can confer upon a subject, is to invest him with his own robes : thus Jonathan manifested his friendship for David, and Ahasuerus rewarded the loyalty of Mordecai. The greatest insult that can be offered to an Eastern sovereign, is to appear before him without the robe of office which he confers, or the habit which he bestows and appropriates to admission

* Hasselquist. See also Harmer's Observations, vol. ii. p. 16.

into his presence on particular occasions: such an omission has even cost a prime-minister his life. When oriental monarchs have received foreign ambassadors to their table, it has been expected of them that they should put over their accustomed dress a robe furnished by the sovereign's liberality. Wedding-dresses were sumptuous to a prodigious expence; and the neglect of a ceremonial robe would be resented by the meanest family in the East: how much more by a king, at the marriage feast of his own son!

It only remains, in explanation of the parable, to advert to the "*outer darkness*" of which it speaks. It is not possible to pass from the blaze of a room of state splendidly illuminated, into the midnight gloom, without being more sensible of the darkness, by the contrast which it forms to the scene from which we have just retired. But the parable supposes an individual hurried from the dazzling brilliancy of an imperial palace, illuminated for a purpose of no common festivity, into the prisons lying at the foundation of it's external walls: not simply expelled the royal residence, and thrust forth to the shadows of the night, but plunged into those melancholy abodes which despotism prepares for persons obnoxious to it's tyranny, and which, even when the meridian sun gladdens the face of nature, admit no cheerful beam.

In these parables there is unquestionably an especial reference to the *Jews*; who not only "made light" of the invitation; but "took his servants, and entreated them despitefully, and slew them." This was their acknowledged treatment of the prophets—this the character given of them in their own records. In the murder of Jesus, and the martyrdom of his apostles, it was exemplified. It was an affecting but just description which St. Paul gave of their persecution of the ministers of religion*: "They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."—This cruelty is avenged: "When the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Our Lord, in the expression of this just indignation against the outrage offered, anticipated and predicted an evil, not then arrived. How fully was this figurative prophecy justified and accom-

* Heb. xi. 36—38.

plished, in the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem—the horrible execution of the Jews on that occasion; and the present state of that afflicted, scattered, degraded, and persecuted people! —To enlarge on these facts is at present impossible; and if the time would suffer it, such an amplification would encroach upon the subject of a future Lecture.

The general sentiment of the text is, however, of universal application; for all men trifle with the means of religious improvement, and multitudes refuse them altogether. Religious subjects in general are included in these parables; and every individual is required by them to examine himself; every man stands before them reprov'd or admonished. Listen, therefore, to their united representations, and their solemn sentence.

The *feast* is the gospel; and it is a royal banquet, an ample provision of mercy. To compare this dispensation of grace, in the fulness in which we enjoy and possess it, with the types of the former Covenant, we cannot but be struck with the superiority of our own Revelation, and cannot be sufficiently thankful for it. *That* had it's characteristic splendour; but *this*, with all it's simplicity of external observances, eclipses it: for “even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory which excelleth.”—“Unto them,” indeed, was

the word of this salvation also sent." When it was covered with dark figures, it was sufficiently intelligible and ample to supply the spiritual graces of such men as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David, and the prophets. "These all died in the faith; "not having received the promises, but having "seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, "and embraced them, and confessed that they "were pilgrims and strangers on the earth." But "blessed are our eyes, for they see,—and our ears, "for they hear,—what kings and prophets desired "to see and to hear," and died without being gratified.

The *invitation* is full and free. God is the Lord of the banquet. He alone could make such a provision—large enough to comprise all who are willing to partake of it; and offered "without money and without price,"—graciously furnished from the inexhaustible stores of his liberality. Look at this provision, in the wisdom of its design, the accomplishment of its preparation, and the benevolence of its invitation;—look at the gospel, in the sublimity of its doctrines, the purity of its precepts, the grandeur of its conceptions, the character of its influence, the perpetuity of its existence, the universality of its application;—and then determine whether it is not the provision of the Deity, for his guilty and ruined creatures. He alone could act upon such

a scale of benevolence: not merely because he only possesses the means of doing it—the wealth to furnish such a feast—but because he alone has the heart to do it. Man is contracted: he has his prejudices against some, his partialities in favour of others;—and these are never more conspicuous than in matters of religion. Hence arise his party spirit, his bigotry, his alternate praises and censures, as his views are met, and his *shibboleth* pronounced; or as the free-born mind of his brother refuses to be bound by these, pleads the cause of conscience, and demands the right of private judgment. Oh! if the doors of heaven were in the keeping of poor, bigoted man, they would be closed against all but his own party: and what a narrow church would the “general assembly” *then* become! The fulness of the invitation discovers the Lord of the feast.

No one less than himself could render efficacious such means as he employs. He sends forth his ministers to plead his cause, and the best interests of the world. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be manifestly of God, and not of us.” By argument and entreaty we have to contend with violent passions, worldly interests, natural propensities, constitutional corruptions, rooted habits, and inveterate prejudices. How disproportionate are such means to such an end! Therefore the apostle said,

“After that the world by wisdom knew not God, “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching “to save them that believe.” Not that folly attaches to the institution of the gospel ministry; but that it is frequently *scorned*: and he accepts the epithet which the world bestowed, to shew it's falsehood by the effects of the principle despised: since, whatever be the preaching of the gospel in human estimation, it proves, in the result, “the wisdom and power of God.” It is possible also that he might tolerate this expression because the inadequacy of the instrumentality to the object contemplated was so great, that the attempt to convert the world by such means would have been folly, but for the promised agency of the Deity, whose wisdom and power gives full success to all the measures which he has prescribed.

The *excuses* offered are frivolous. “They made “light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, “another to his merchandize.”—“They all with “one consent began to make excuse. The first “said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, “and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee “have me excused. And another said, I have “bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove “them: I pray thee have me excused. And “another said, I have married a wife, and there- “fore I cannot come.”—Men seldom agree in better things; but in these excuses they are of

One mind, and their apologies bear one character,—they are equally insignificant, and equally untrue. Thus the provision of mercy has been rejected in all ages by human perverseness. The refusal with some has been *open*: “They would not have him to reign over them:”—they said at once to the invitation, “I will not.” They avowedly opposed the principles, and resisted the progress of the gospel. They despised the mercy of God, and defied his power. This was at least manly: and we cannot but lament that such courage was not shewn in a better cause, and in connection with a right object. With others it was *evasive*. And here the analogy between them and us is too obvious not to force conviction upon our hearts. The solicitation of Divine goodness is urgent, for it is repeated: messenger after messenger is sent; and admonition is added to entreaty. The forbearance of God astonishes us: for what a character of perseverance is attached to his invitations! Man is soon repelled, easily offended, jealous of his dignity:—God forbears, forgives, renews his gracious solicitations,—and still pleads, “Turn ye, turn ye! why will ye die?”—still urges, “Come! for all things are ready.” Many of those who refuse, excuse themselves on the plea of their farm and merchandise—their worldly occupations. How *mean* is this! They sin with an obstinate heart, yet dare not do

it with "a high hand." How *frivolous* is this! for what competition can possibly exist in reality between what they refuse and what they pursue? How *false* is this! for religious and worldly duties are by no means irreconcilable or incompatible. How *insulting* is this! for they ought to have left all at his word, and to have followed him without hesitation, or reluctance, or stipulation. And some added injury to insult, when they defamed his cause, and destroyed his ministers.

The *power* of the inviter to destroy is terrible. He sent forth his armies, to cut off those rebels.—And what resources has he not at his command? what magazines of wrath against the day of vengeance! He drove forth the Canaanites, not by the sword and bow of Israel, but by the hornet. He scourged the land of promise for the iniquity of it's inhabitants, by the mildew, and caterpillar, and canker-worm, and locust,—an army great and terrible, darkening the heavens, unbroken in their ranks, irresistible in their invasion: the country was as "the garden of Eden before them; and behind them a desolate wilderness." He plagued Egypt with new and terrible judgments. He slew the army of Assyria with sudden death, by the agency of an angel. And will you wait to prove the force of his indignation, and linger until he opens his stores of hail, and lightning, and thunder, and tempest,—and continue to oppose,

until he shall rouse in his seat of majesty, and fight against you with all his storms? Oh! relinquish the unequal fight, and implore his pardon and his friendship!

The *guests* are described as “the halt, and the lame, and the blind,”—gathered from the “highways and the hedges,”—strong and striking figures of our utter worthlessness and misery. At the same time, the places to which the servants were sent, were best calculated to gather a large company. The highways properly signify places where many roads meet. And thus the gospel is taking its station on the most public spots, and issuing its proclamation of mercy to all lands; while those who are gathered to its banquet are impoverished, helpless, and humble. All ranks are invited: but every man must be poor in his own esteem, and receive a full salvation as a free gift.

The introduction of the *wedding-garment* into the parable, we have already seen, is in conformity to Eastern customs: but this figure, applied to the spiritual import of these allegories, must intend a justifying righteousness—that imputed righteousness of Christ, without which there can be no justification,—and without justification there can be no admission. It is also a righteousness imparted; it is inseparable from sanctification,—it is personal holiness wrought by the Spirit of God,

without which there can be no fitness. "What
 "God hath joined together, let no man put
 "asunder."

The *punishment*—is of an awful character. It is
detection. "When the king came in to see the
 "guests, he saw there a man which had not on
 "a wedding-garment." The hypocrite is dis-
 covered.—It is *confusion*. "And he saith unto
 "him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not
 "having a wedding-garment? And he was
 "speechless." Courage, plausibility, evasion, all
 fail.—It is *expulsion*. "Then said the king unto
 "the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and
 "take him away." He is driven with disgrace
 from the society into which he obtruded, and which
 he dishonoured.—It is *destruction*. "Cast him
 "into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and
 "gnashing of teeth."—And is this the end of
 brilliant profession, and uncommon privileges?
 Do the pretensions of the mere professor thus
 terminate? "Then I saw there was a way to
 hell, even from the gates of heaven."

The *success* of the gospel is seen, in the filling
 of his sanctuary, and the consummation of the
 christian's hopes in heaven: for there the great feast
 is spread; and the happy guests enjoy the banquet
 of Divine love. Supposing the gospel to be in-
 tended primarily by this image,—this is its object,
 and its issue.

It is heaven ;—for *there the purposes of redemption are complete*. Here they are but progressively advancing towards their consummation. Whoever has examined with care the inspired volume, will discover that one object is proposed, to which every thing else is subordinate ;—it is, the salvation of the world, and *that* by the scheme of redemption presented and developed in the gospel. Whatever remains of history—whatever of institution—whatever of prophecy—whatever of devotional composition—each bears upon this point, in it's own way. And whoever will take the trouble faithfully to examine the events of providence—partly recorded, and partly passing before his eyes—must be convinced that God himself appears to have had but one object in rearing the universe, and affording the grant of time ; and this object, to glorify himself in the salvation of man. Therefore events the most remote and the most dissimilar, in public and in private, are sometimes seen most wonderfully connected with this design ; and that connection is not the less real where it is invisible to us. Yet the work which has been advancing through so many centuries, and under changing dispensations, with invariable perseverance, is not complete. As yet, the fruit of the travail of the Saviour's soul is not reaped ;—as yet, his empire is not universal ;—as yet, his work is not finished ;—as yet, his redeemed are not gathered ;—“ as yet, we see not all things put

under him." The same work which is carrying on in the world, is in progression in the hearts of his people ;—but it is not perfected. They are holy, but not sinless ;—happy, but not out of the reach of affliction ;—tending to glory, but not in possession of it ;—advancing to heaven, but not sheltered there. The supper is preparing—the guests are invited ; but all are not yet assembled in the palace of this great King.

It is heaven ;—for *there every thing is provided for pleasure and perpetuity*. Here, "all things work together for our good ;" but all things are not *pleasing*. Much must be endured as discipline,—much suffered to humble and prove us, and to discover us to ourselves. Here, sickness and sorrow have each their operation upon the body and upon the mind, to awaken us to a sense of our duties, to destroy our self-confidence, to quicken our diligence, to inspire our activity, to try our faith,—and, finally, to dissolve the connection between the body and the spirit, only that it may hereafter be re-established free from all those imperfections which now oppress it. Do sickness and sorrow become a feast? But in that world, where this nuptial banquet is spread, there is

" No more fatigue, no more distress,

" Nor sin, nor hell, shall reach the place :

" No groans, to mingle with the songs

" That warble from immortal tongues !"

"The former things," and these are all included among them, "are passed away."

We have seen that all things are progressive here ; but they are not *perpetual*,—they could not be otherwise advancing to perfection. Our sabbaths return in their season, and remain only for a season. Our ministers, like the messengers from heaven in former days, the angels who were sent to the patriarchs, deliver their message, and disappear. Many gather round the grave of one, and take up the lamentation, "Alas, my brother!" or exclaim, "My father! my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" And his offices are performed, his pulpit is filled, by another.—So we pass away in succession. The table spread here is continually shifting its guests: but it is not so with the banquet of eternity.

It is heaven ;—for *there the guests are uniform*. Here they are gathered from all nations—they sit at different tables—call themselves by different names—speak a different tongue—range under a different party—and are sometimes scarcely in charity with each other. But there, collected from all quarters of the world, they appear in one dress—they are called by one name—they meet in one place—they participate one salvation—they are "of one heart, and of one mind." *Here*, they differ in talents: and even *there*, they shall probably differ in glory;—but the glory of each

shall be perfect in itself; and every happy spirit shall possess as much as it can enjoy—shall contain a felicity overflowing all, according to the capacity of each. So that, while they differ in glory, they are alike and equal in enjoyment; each possessing as much as it can grasp. “There is
“one glory of the sun, and another glory of the
“moon, and another glory of the stars: for one
“star differeth from another star in glory.” No tulip bed exhibits a richer assemblage of colours than the heavenly bodies, when seen through telescopes of the first order; yet this variety, while each has its own splendour, and is perfect in its kind, adds to the grandeur and beauty of the whole scene. If, then, the feast intends the dispensation of the gospel *generally*, it must refer to heaven, where the whole is complete, *particularly*. —Are you desirous of sharing these eternal benefits? What shall hinder you? Approach;—for “yet there is room.”

LECTURE XI.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE XV. 7.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

THE remarks which were made in the preliminary Lectures of this course, receive ample elucidation in the subject which is now to occupy your attention. The touching character of our Lord's allegories is most conspicuous in the parable forming the prominent object of this evening's discourse; and the simplicity and tenderness of his style finds no parallel, except perhaps in the affecting history of Joseph,—a narrative which has received the homage of all ages.

It is the peculiar excellence of the scriptures always to represent the Deity in a manner worthy of him: he speaks, purposes, acts, punishes, like himself, without any mixture of human caprice, petulance, or meanness. When we compare these

representations with the grovelling and unworthy conceptions entertained of the Divinity in the absence of revelation, and even tolerated by the wisest and best of the heathen philosophers, we are not more struck with the contrast between them, than we are impelled to admit the indisputable claims of the Bible to be the word of God, upon these obvious and irresistible evidences. But while we expect the delineations of the divine character, traced by an inspired pen, to accord with the sublimity of the subject, our expectations are raised to an extraordinary degree when the Son of God himself undertakes to reveal him:—nor are we disappointed. “No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” And what a proclamation of the attributes of God he makes! Whatever be the image employed, the benevolence and the grandeur of the character is uniform. As a Sovereign, what majesty!—as a Master, what bounty!—as a Parent, what tenderness!—as a God, what perfection!

Further; the importance of those objects which stood connected with our Lord's parables is most conspicuous in this. He never wasted his eloquence upon points trivial in themselves, or useless to mankind. The pedant exhausts his talents, and consumes his time, in the vain labour of attempting to communicate importance to pompous

nothings. The orator considers himself as having attained the summit of his art, when he can embellish every little subject so as to render insignificance attractive; and so exercise his skill, as to throw a charm over that which is perfectly devoid of consequence in itself. And sometimes even the pulpit is desecrated to subordinate purposes; and those who were sent to deliver a message of infinite import to lost and dying men, sport with their commission and the souls of their hearers, and amuse those whom they ought to alarm, substitute the puerilities of the fancy for the substantial truths of the gospel, and trifle, while thousands are hourly dropping into eternity around them. Jesus never spake a parable but with the most serious intention; and his allegories turned upon the most momentous subjects. "To reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; to correct the unruly, and to strengthen the weak; to check the presumptuous, and to instruct the ignorant; to

———"assert eternal providence,

"And justify the ways of God to men;"

to unfold the great scheme of human redemption, and make known the certainty and the general features of the eternal world;—these were his magnificent objects.

On the present occasion, we shall be furnished with a pregnant instance of the concessions which must be made in parables, on the part of the subject, to the preservation of the imagery: since it will be seen, that several circumstances are introduced to perfect the beauty of the allegory, which cannot be applied to any thing spiritual. The determination, on the part of some preachers, to apply to a spiritual purpose all the circumstances of every parable, many of which are purely natural, and are introduced merely to sustain the integrity of the figure, produces strange confusion in their amplification of that which is perfectly simple in itself, and renders difficult and perplexed the most obvious sentiments expressed in the most intelligible language. Such fanciful interpretations weaken the force, disturb the harmony, and destroy the beauty of the scriptures, particularly the figurative parts of them; and pervert important passages from their legitimate object.

There can be selected few passages in the scriptures which have been tortured more to serve a party purpose than the subject of the present Lecture. The two sons have been supposed to represent the Gentiles and the Jews. The profligacy of the younger was easily transferred to the vile practices and wretched resources of the nations unblest with the word of truth; and the obedience of the elder, when combined

especially with his morose, jealous, and unamiable temper, was supposed to apply aptly to the privileges and prejudices of the children of Abraham. But considerable difficulty arose in respect of their adherence to the commandment of their Father; when it was obvious they had broken it in every point, and as frequently as they could, until their guilt and ingratitude were proverbial, and formed the subject of many threatening parables. These difficulties multiplied upon those who resolved to spiritualize every circumstance of the parable, and to make every particular, admitted to complete the allegory, an indisputable representation of religious truth. A further examination of the subject, in its connection, will prove that the parable refers neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, according to the system endeavoured by such annotators to be established; but illustrates a general principle, which might indeed refer to them in part, but assuredly not more directly than it may be applied to many existing characters. There are three parables on one point; each of them taking the decorations corresponding with the image selected, and unitedly establishing one grand sentiment conveyed in the text, selected and presented to your reflections on this account.

Laying aside the contracted systems which have attempted to confine this beautiful parable within

their narrow circumference, I shall call your attention to the occasion on which it was delivered, as best explaining the immediate intention of our Lord ; and thus producing it's obvious and magnanimous sentiment, without calling in the assistance of imagination.

“ Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners, to hear him.” He produced, as a sign of his mission, the fact that “ The poor had the gospel preached unto them.” And *that* preaching must be always deemed the most scriptural, which, while it attracts the vicious by the force and affection of it's appeals, is found to reclaim them by the purity and divinity of its principles. The sermons which only please the superficial, or interest the learned by their speculations, or gratify the polite by their taste and eloquence, may indeed give a transient popularity to the preacher,—which he ought to despise, if lent him on such grounds; or distinguish him as a man of elegant literature: but the ministry which God approves, is founded upon the grand and convincing doctrines of the gospel; and while it often gives offence because of it's plainness and simplicity, never fails to subdue human obduracy, and, gathering the vilest characters around the cross, while it pronounces their pardon, requires their obedience.

“ And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, “ saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth

"with them." This was the *occasion* of three parables, of which

THE PRODIGAL SON

was one. When we can clearly ascertain the evil intended to be corrected, it is easy to determine the sentiment designed to be advanced. It is here a self-righteous spirit, disdaining to associate with those whose offences were open to the world, but whose penitence was a divine effect, leading them to the feet of the Redeemer. If any description of persons be more distinctly intended by the "elder brother," these displeased Pharisees are the persons censured; and the judgment then extends to every censorious, peevish character, who, like Jonah, takes offence at the distribution of divine mercy, and is jealous that others should be admitted to privileges which they are disposed to consider peculiarly their own.

The *sentiment* of the parable is conveyed in the text:—"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." That this is the principle intended to be established, is evident from the term "likewise," referring it to the allegory, and marking it as the conclusion to be drawn from the imagery employed. The sentiment, and the only sentiment, of the three parables is,

that *the Deity feels a peculiar satisfaction in the conversion and salvation of the spirit about to perish.* It is a sentiment expressed in the Prophets in the most solemn and awful words, taking the form of an oath: "As truly as I live, saith the Lord, "I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but "had rather he should turn from his wickedness "and live." Although this sentiment applies it's consolations and encouragement principally to the dissipated, the backslider, and the vile,—it can only apply to them as truly awakened to a sense of their guilt and danger, and as sincerely hating the sins which conducted them to the brink of ruin. It cannot be inferred as an encouragement to "sin, that grace may abound:" and to guard against a conclusion so dreadful and profane, it is necessary to examine the close of the passage, which may seem to countenance it:—"Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner "that repenteth, *more* than over ninety and nine "just persons which need no repentance." Some have understood by the term "just persons," self-righteous characters, who *suppose* they need no repentance,—applying the sentiment to the Pharisees. But, not to say the statement is positive from the lips of our Lord, and not founded on their misconceptions, it is evident that a comparison is instituted—that the images suppose these persons in a state of safety—that the con-

dition of the self-righteous could afford the sympathizing spirits in heaven *no* joy whatever; consequently, the joy at the conversion of a sinner would form a contrast with their feelings towards such characters, but no point of comparison. It is intimated, that they rejoice with the one, but rejoice *more* with the other. Again, it has been applied to the righteous; and glossed, that they need not such *deep* repentance, because there is "none that liveth and sinneth not,"—none, therefore, who do not stand in need of repentance. This is to depart from the declaration of Christ, which is, that they "need *no* repentance,"—and to paraphrase without sufficient authority from the text. The opinion of some of the Fathers*, that, by the just persons, the angels who never sinned are intended, is still more fanciful and inadmissible; since they are not of a nature common with our own, a circumstance supposed by all the parables; and they are represented not as those between whom the comparison is instituted, but as of the party taking peculiar pleasure in the conversion of sinners. The meaning of the passage may be best determined by an attention to the terms employed in the original. The "just persons†" I consider as meaning real and established saints,

* St. Ambrose, Hilary, and Chrysostom.

† *δικαίους*.

who need no "repentance*," no *conversion*, or *universal change of heart and life*,—no abandonment of evil pursuits which they have already renounced—no *new principle*, having already been regenerated. It cannot intend that God estimates a returning sinner *above* these his approved children: but, by a most beautiful and natural image, it is said, that as a shepherd, equally prizing *all* his flock, feels most for any *one* of them exposed to death;—as a woman possessed of pieces of money of *equal* value, secure of that which is safe, is anxious principally for any one piece which she has lost;—as a father, loving both his children alike, feels more anxiety for one of them who has left his roof, and is ensnared by every evil which is calculated to precipitate his ruin; and rejoices more (notwithstanding his equal affection) over this child delivered from circumstances so dangerous, so powerfully assailing his paternal feelings, than over the other, who has always remained under his roof, and never been placed in a situation so perilous;—so all heaven rejoices over "a brand plucked out of the fire;" and God himself is represented as taking peculiar satisfaction in the return of the backslider, and the conversion of the profligate. It must be granted, indeed, that our

* *περδωκεν.*

Lord speaks after the manner of men; therefore he "spake to them in parables:"—but had he not so spoken, the sentiment could not have been so readily conceived; and it must be admitted, that, under the imagery selected, every thing is easy, natural, and touching.

Having stated and examined the sentiment, it is necessary to proceed to its illustrations. It is conveyed under three parables. The first is that of the Lost Sheep †. "And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." The general intentions of this parable are the same with those of the principal subject of the Lecture, only expressed in terms corresponding with the image employed: these must not, therefore, be anticipated. But one circumstance is noted here, which is not distinctly marked in the greater parable; it is, the *diligent means* which the shepherd employs for the recovery of his lost sheep. The father, indeed, is

† Luke xv. 3—6.

represented as giving a cordial welcome to his returning child: but here the shepherd not only rejoices over the wanderer when it is found, but goes "after that which is lost, until he find it." The institutions of religion are calculated to reclaim the wandering; but they derive their efficacy from the circumstance that God himself is present, to give them effect by the influences of the Holy Spirit. These means are applied with a perseverance as admirable as the power which finally renders them successful. He seeks—"until he find it." Delay, resistance, ingratitude, cannot extinguish his affection, nor induce him to withdraw his Spirit. He perseveres, until the heart is subdued to himself. Observe, again, the same principle elucidated in the piece of silver*.

"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver,
"if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and
"sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find
"it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her
"friends and her neighbours together, saying, Re-
"joice with me; for I have found the piece which I
"had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in
"the presence of the angels of God over one sinner
"that repenteth." The sentiment advanced here, common indeed to all the illustrations, but less questionable in this shape, is, *the equal value of all*

* Luke.xv. 8—10.

the subjects of these parables. The lost sheep and the profligate child are not, in themselves, of more value than the remaining flock and the "elder son;" the circumstances alone give a superior interest to those who were endangered, in the estimation of the shepherd and of the parent. Not to establish a system of partiality, but to demonstrate the Divine paternity, were these parables spoken. This is evident from the subject under immediate consideration; because all the pieces of money were precisely of the same value, yet the anxiety of their possessor is directed to the piece which was lost. Should it be judged that too much is made of her joy in finding a piece so inconsiderable†, let it be remembered that it was the tenth part of her property, perhaps of her *whole* property. Every thing is valued according to the circumstances of those by whom it is estimated. The rich waste property with a profuse and careless hand: the poor appreciate it better, because they feel the want of it. This introduces the leading parable, spoken on the same occasion, and founded on the same principle‡. "And he said, "A certain man had two sons: And the younger "of them said to his father, Father, give me the "portion of goods that falleth to me. And he

† A drachma, value about nine-pence.

‡ Luke xv. 11—32.

“divided unto them his living. And not many
“days after, the younger son gathered all together,
“and took his journey into a far country, and there
“wasted his substance with riotous living. And
“when he had spent all, there arose a mighty
“famine in that land; and he began to be in
“want. And he went and joined himself to a
“citizen of that country; and he sent him into
“the fields to feed swine. And he would fain
“have filled his belly with the husks that the
“swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.
“And when he came to himself, he said, How
“many hired servants of my father’s have bread
“enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
“I will arise, and go to my father, and will say
“unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven,
“and before thee, and am no more worthy to be
“called thy son: make me as one of thy hired
“servants. And he arose, and came to his father.
“But when he was yet a great way off, his father
“saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell
“on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said
“unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven,
“and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be
“called thy son. But the father said to his ser-
“vants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on
“him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on
“his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and
“kill it; and let us eat and be merry: For this my

“son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost,
“and is found. And they began to be merry.—
“Now his elder son was in the field: and as he
“came and drew nigh to the house, he heard
“music and dancing: And he called one of the
“servants, and asked what these things meant.
“And he said unto him, Thy brother is come;
“and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because
“he hath received him safe and sound. And he
“was angry, and would not go in: therefore came
“his father out, and entreated him. And he
“answering said to his father, Lo, these many
“years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at
“any time thy commandment: and yet thou never
“gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with
“my friends: But as soon as this thy son was
“come, which hath devoured thy living with har-
“lots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.
“And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with
“me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet
“that we should make merry and be glad: for this
“thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was
“lost, and is found.”

In this parable, there are certain allusions to oriental scenery, customs, and habits of thinking. It was no degradation to attend to agricultural concerns;—for the elder brother returns from *the field*, in which he had not walked for indulgence, but laboured with his own hand, or superintended

the labours of others, guarding the dignity by securing the possessions of the family, and himself seeing them cultivated to the best advantage. Where the work prospers, there must be the eye of the master: and those who commit to others the management of concerns which they might themselves overlook, must be satisfied to submit to very considerable deductions from the produce of their property. But it was a very great degradation on the part of the younger son—and one to which he would not have submitted but from the most absolute necessity—to *feed swine*. Even the occupation of a shepherd was abhorrent to the Egyptians: and if this parable be considered as spoken to Jews, who would naturally apply to it all their national and ceremonial prejudices, swine, as an unclean and forbidden animal, besides its natural filth, was an abomination to them; and such employment would be deemed equally debasing and disgusting.

The husks, upon which the prodigal fed in a time of famine, must have been some very poor wild fruit. Some have considered it as a species of tree*, growing in Palestine, bearing pods, the fruit of which is extremely meagre, although not altogether unpleasant to the taste; and has been supposed to be a principal part of the food of John the Baptist. Dr. Doddridge thinks

* *The Carob-tree.*

it could be only the shells or pods of this fruit; if indeed it were not a wild chesnut. It was probably an aliment as impoverished and unsatisfying to him, as acorns would prove to us.

The returning prodigal pleads that he may be admitted as an *hired servant*: "not," observes Dr. Doddridge, "because such servants fared worse than slaves; but because he himself was an hired servant, and therefore naturally compared his own condition with those of that rank in his father's family." But I think another reason may be assigned for his resolution to employ this plea, arising out of his humility. An hired servant was always liable to be dismissed: but he who determined to devote his life to his lord, according to the prescription of the Jewish law, signified his intention by suffering his ear to be nailed to the post of the door, after which he was considered as his servant for ever. It appears to me that this penitent child is so sensible of his unworthiness, that, offering himself to his parent in the most menial capacity, he does not solicit to be admitted to the claim of a perpetual place in his father's house, but only to be *tried*, as an hired servant, that his sincerity might be proved, and that he might be dismissed and disowned if he were undeserving this poor and humiliating indulgence.

The *robe* with which his father invested him was never worn by servants; it was an appendage

to rank, especially when joined with the *shoes* and the *ring*,—the last being always worn by persons of good circumstances. A most delicate and public intimation this, that he designed not merely to receive him as his son, but to cause him to be so acknowledged by all his household, and all his connections. The ring is the most common and ancient ornament of the person known, and usually served as the signet of the wearer; while the loan of it to another transferred, for the time being, to that individual, all the authority of the proprietor.

The *fatted calf* was considered the most honourable part of an entertainment: this flesh, with that of lambs and of kids, may be said to constitute Eastern luxury,—which excludes, for the most part, game, fish, and fowls. When Jacob provided a dish to impose upon his father, while Esau was hunting for venison, it was a *kid*, dressed by his mother in a way peculiarly suited to the palate of the patriarch, who appears to have been but too exquisite a judge of meats. When Abraham entertained his illustrious guests under the oak at Mamre, he “ran into the herd, and “fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it “unto a young man, and he hasted to dress it.” The manner of preparing it, with “butter and milk,” is unchanged among the Arabians to this day. It appears singular to us, that the animal

should be killed immediately as it was wanted ; but the reason will be evident, upon a moment's reflection ;—in warm weather it could not be possible to preserve flesh in the East : it is not, therefore, attempted to keep fresh meat from meal to meal, but it is the practice to resort to the flock exactly as it is necessary.

His father "*fell on his neck, and kissed him.*"—The mode of salutation observed in ancient times ; represented by Homer, in the meeting between Ulysses and Telemachus ; and recorded by an author with whom Homer will bear no comparison,—Moses, in the first interview of Joseph with his father Jacob. In these, and in similar passages, the reference appears to be to an Eastern custom of kissing the *shoulder*, as well as the hand, the head, the cheek, and the beard.

The *music and dancing*, which gave offence to the elder brother, was a natural, and not irrational expression of joy, on the part of this household, made happy by the return of one of it's principal members, long since given up as dead ; or, what was worse than death, as lost to them, and to every good and noble purpose. But an acquaintance with Eastern customs places this circumstance in a much more important point of view. It was the practice, when any child of the family returned from some honourable excursion, to hire both a band of music and a company of dancers.

This, therefore, was the highest honour the father could put upon his returning son: for while it was to him the indication that all his failings were wiped away, as by an act of oblivion, it introduced him to his family and his neighbours as one who had returned to honour his father's house, by the treatment with which he met.

These are the circumstances which appeared to require illustration, as founded upon local peculiarities. The rest of the parable is plain, and obviously proceeds upon general principles. The more the story is examined, the more beautiful does its structure appear, and the more important its sentiments. What can be more touching, than to see a young man forsake his father's house,—leave the guide of his youth, and abandon himself, when the passions are strong, and the judgment least matured, to his natural propensities, and the seductions of a world lying in wait to deceive!

Was this an indulgent parent, whose weakness sacrificed his judgment to his affections, in making this young man his own master too early? or, had the youth arrived at an age in which, according to the custom of his country, he had a right to expect, and to ask, a share in the family property, for his own disposal, if he no longer chose to live under his father's roof, and to devote himself to agricultural pursuits? I suspect this latter is the

statement intended to be made by the parable. The former supposition may be a lesson to some parents, whose advances of property to their children is as imprudent and injurious to their morals, as the avaricious reserve of others is contemptible and oppressive. It is probable, also, that the father concluded his child intended, in his departure from a roof where he had been always sheltered and indulged, to dispose of his fortune in some mercantile pursuit; for the prosecution of which he "gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country."

Behold! he departs—full of the flatteries of hope in his own bosom. He will be his own master; he will no longer submit to the controul of another. He calls up the visionary scenes of prospective happiness, which he had often anticipated, and upon which he now imagines himself about to enter, to sustain the moment of separation, and to enable him to pronounce the last farewell with firmness. In the fulness of his joy, the bitterness of parting is absorbed. His father's eyes pursue him, until he disappears; and his overflowing heart follows him, when the eyes, swimming in tears, no longer behold him. O ye, who are about to enter life, look at this parent, turning with a slow and melancholy step into a palace which has lost its charms, because he is bereaved of his child! Listen to the voice of

your mother, following up her wise admonitions with the most persuasive entreaties ! “ What, “ my son ? and what, the son of my womb ? and “ what, the son of my vows ? ” Can you refuse, or forget, or despise, such an appeal ? Take care : it is the first step : it may give the character to your life. It may be the triumph of your parents, or it may bring down their “ grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

Whatever might have been his pretensions, he yielded the rein to his passions, and became an easy prey to temptation. “ He wasted his substance in riotous living,”—in noisy dissipation ; a career as destructive to his person, as to his property and his soul. Such a course distinguishes our young men of fashion. They call it pleasure. Go, and write it on the tomb-stone of the martyr of sensuality, who died in the morning of his life ; and see how it will read there. It sounds well in a song ; but how does it look in an epitaph ? He was most improvident,—for “ he spent all.”

Did he expect to find friends, when he had dissipated his property ? Possibly he was so unskilled in the knowledge of mankind, as to form so rash and so false a conclusion. The hour of trial is at hand. The termination of his prosperity, and of the resources of the country where he sojourned, arrived together. “ A mighty famine

arose,"—"he began to be in want,"—and "no man gave unto him." How many had eaten of his bread, and drank of his cup! how many had assisted in the waste of his property! how many had flattered him while he had abundance! This is the friendship of the world,—formed and dissolved for convenience or interest. And for this faithless friend, men ruin their souls, and renounce heaven. He submits to his self-procured calamity; and patiently looks out for such menial employment as might, under such circumstances, be procured. This is the act of a great and of a virtuous mind; and emanations of a superior spirit may be seen amidst all the darkness of his adversity.

He had been taught a painful but important lesson on the subject of human ingratitude; and he had a melancholy leisure to think it over;—and he "came to himself." A worldly career leaves no time for reflection: a course of sin is a state of madness: "When he came to himself," he thought of his home, his indulgent father,—his forfeited happiness: he contrasted these with his folly and his poverty; and while he reflected, his heart warmed into desire, and melted into contrition. He envied the meanest domestic of his father's household: "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" Now he felt that the way

of transgressors is hard. At length, he adopts the wise resolution to return,—to conquer alike the shame and the fear, and cast himself upon parental tenderness. Now he began to feel some of those pangs which he had inflicted in the bosom of his injured father; and he returns with a chastised, humble, penitent, obedient spirit.

“ His father saw him afar off.” Frequently and long had he watched and waited for his return, until hope deferred made the heart sick. He knew him, although he was clothed in rags, when he was yet at a distance. How powerful is the voice, how irresistible are the feelings of nature, when they are not drowned in passion, or palsied by avarice! He met, he received him graciously; he forgave him all. Some may forgive too promptly; and thus afford, by their very virtue, a sanction to vice, or, at least, a licence to rebellion. This is a rare infirmity, and deserves respect, because of the affection in which it originates: the more common and the more despicable evil is, that parents, influenced by avarice, or enslaved by temper, frequently refuse to receive the prodigal to their heart, and give no space for repentance, no opportunity to redeem his character. Unnatural and unfeeling as they are! let them learn, “ he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath shewed no mercy.”

The return of this poor wanderer affords joy to

all the family ; to all excepting one,—and *that* one, his brother ! At a time when the penitent was restored to his heart (but he had *no* heart !)—to his family—to his father—to himself, he is tormented with jealousy, while every bosom but his own was the mansion of joy. With what tenderness his parent argued against his unjust and wicked passion ! with what unbending haughtiness he refused to participate the general joy ! with what insolent assurance he arraigned the justice and affection of his father ! No punishment follows this crime, because he carried the punishment in his own bosom : and a worse could not be devised than that which was self-inflicted,—the pangs of “envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness.” The latter appears in his accusation of his brother,—“thy son, which hath devoured thy living with harlots.” The first charge was untrue ; he had *not* devoured his father’s living : he had indeed spent his *own* portion ; but enough remained, and to spare. The second is no where affirmed : he lived riotously, but it is *not* said he spent his substance on harlots : but passion and envy seldom regard truth : falsehood, misrepresentation, and aggravation, are the fuel upon which the devouring flame of calumny is fed.—Let the unnatural murmurer depart : we dismiss him with pity and contempt ; and turn to sympathize with a father’s exultation, while he says, “It was meet that we

“ should make merry and be glad : for this thy
“ brother was dead, and is alive again ; and was
“ lost, and is found.”

It only remains that we should apply the great principles of this parable to general purposes, and especially to ourselves. In the character of the Father, who does not recognise *the compassionate Deity*? Of all the titles which he wears, that of a Parent is most endearing—most frequent—most attractive. When we have been elevated by the magnificent displays of his eternal power and Godhead,—the matchless descriptions of his majesty contained in his word ; when we have been carried round the harmonious circle of his perfections, and exhausted in the contemplation of the infinity of his attributes ; how securely and how delightfully the mind reposes on his paternity ! and with what complacency it listens to the declaration, “ Like as a father pitieth his children, the Lord pitieth them that fear him ” ! He provides for them with inexhaustible liberality. He sometimes permits them to choose their own way, that they may learn to distrust themselves, and implicitly to submit to his will, rely on his wisdom, and follow his direction. And with all the heart of a father, he pities, receives, and forgives them.

In the character of the prodigal, who does not discover *his own*?—In how many instances have

we sinned against heaven, and in HIS sight : for every offence against ourselves and against society—the neglect of every duty, the indulgence of every passion—whoever may be injured on earth, is an outrage offered the God of heaven, whose laws we break, and whose authority we resist. And every sin is committed in his sight, in whatever secret retreat, and with whatever caution it may be done. He follows the murderer into the wilderness and solitary place ; the sensualist into the adulterous chamber ; the decent and plausible into the secret haunts of vice ; the avaricious into all the mazes of their dealings and speculations.

The *backslider* is more especially intended ; who, having felt the power of religion, is seduced by temptation, and, gradually yielding to the spirit and example of the world, relaxes in religious duties, grows cold in his affections, languid in his exertions, formal in his worship, insensibly and progressively conforming to it's habits, until he finds himself, at length wholly resigned to it's influence. It plunders him of his consolations, and abandons him to despair. Then he remembers his former state, and mourns over his departed joys. He cannot feed upon the unprofitable pleasures for which he left his Father's house, and upon which his worldly companions live. He remembers the privileges enjoyed by his Father's servants ; and longs to share them under the paternal roof.

In these emotions and desires, and in his resolution, to throw himself at the feet of his injured parent, we trace the *awakening and reclaiming influences* of the Spirit of God. These are powerful and successful. They dissolve the heart with repentance; infuse hope into the bosom; clothe the spirit with humility; and fill it with fervent, prevailing prayer.

In the reception given the prodigal, behold the *goodness* and compassion of God towards the repenting sinner, and the returning backslider! "Turn again to your strong hold, ye prisoners of hope!" Take unto you words, and say, "Heal all our backslidings, and forgive all our iniquities! accept us graciously, and love us freely!" He listens, he answers: he says, "Come, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

And while this delightful attribute of mercy is so conspicuously seen in the Divine character, is there any elder brother—any self-righteous, censorious professor—displeased at it's manifestation? There are many such—many who think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, and despise others. And if they dare not openly arraign the proceedings of Divine grace, and the ample provisions of Divine mercy, they manifest their discontent by the distance which they keep

from the reclaimed prodigal—the jealousies which they indulge—the suspicions which they entertain—the reluctance with which they admit him into church communion—the remembrance of his past deportment which they retain—and the malice and skill with which they contrive to wound him afresh, by some casual allusion to the repented and forgiven error.

O turn from these disgraceful passions of humanity, to contemplate again the grand principle of the text! Whom God forgives, (and “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,”) he forgives freely, fully, promptly; and, rejoicing over his returning child, he suffers all heaven to participate the triumph obtained over sin and satan, in the redemption of an immortal spirit from ruin. Rejoice, holy, happy, spirits! by your generous sympathy ye increase your own felicity. Saved by the grace which ye celebrate, we hope also soon to join your society, and, with our triumphant harps, encircle the throne of our forgiving Father.

LECTURE XII.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

JAMES V. 5.

Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton: ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

THIS passage is a fine illustration of the subject proposed to us this night for consideration; and which is the second parabolic elucidation of the evil of unsanctified prosperity. In the first, we beheld a wretch wholly occupied in the extension of his interests, and exclusively influenced by the love of money. He referred all his increase to his own exertions, and concentrated all his gratification in multiplying the means of grasping still more; while he was manifestly rendered miserable by that which he already possessed. To the shifts and hard expedients of honest poverty, straitened in the daily supply, and wringing it's scanty pittance with difficulty from the rough hand of toil, he was a stranger: *his* embarrassments arose from abundance. In the midst of his vain projects, and

while he anticipated that happiness at a distant day which he had not then tasted, the wrath of Heaven arose—the sentence of death was pronounced—and, in the same night, his soul was required, and his possessions passed into the hand of another. He formed a memorable example of the grand and awful description of the Psalmist*:
 “They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever;) that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names.”—“This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.”—“Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased: for when he

* Ps. xlix. 6—11, 13, 14, 16—20.

“dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory
“shall not descend after him. Though, whiles
“he lived, he blessed his soul: (and men will
“praise thee when thou doest well to thyself:)
“he shall go to the generation of his fathers;
“they shall never see light. Man that is in
“honour, and understandeth not, is like the
“beasts that perish.” I have no hesitation in
saying, we have before us a much more illustrious
and amiable character—a man, who did not centre
in himself his gratifications, or drink alone of the
cup of pleasure—a man who distributed abroad,
with a prodigality too lavish—a man who loved
not wealth for it’s own sake, but only for the
enjoyments it could purchase, and who was willing
to share them with others,—a man, whose con-
demnation sprang not from vicious practices, but
from an useless and luxurious life.

In both, the same evil and ruinous principle
existed, and in an equal degree; but in each, it
operated according to the constitutional bias, and
the prevailing disposition of the mind: and in the
last instance, it found a more enlarged and gene-
rous spirit upon which to act. The love of the
world is the destructive principle: and this manifests
itself in different ways; sometimes in the thirst of
avarice; at others, in the desire of pleasure; but
always in hostility to God. It makes one man
a miser, and another a sensualist, according to

the temper of each: but it deprives both alike of heaven. The apostle James describes both these modes of operation, while he exposes the general dangers attendant upon prosperity, and sounds in the ears of the affluent the warning voice of truth: "Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." All are exposed to destruction; but not all in the same way. Some are consumed by the corroding spirit of avarice: "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure against the last days." Such a character was the rich worldling, whose spirit and doom have been already contemplated. Others employ their power and wealth to oppress the needy; and not only shut their hearts against the cries of distress, but defraud the industrious. The former character was that of a fool;—this is that of a demon. The one scarcely deserved to be called a man;—this must be considered as a monster. A rich man under the dominion of avarice is an object of pity and contempt;—a man of affluence who grinds the faces of the poor, deserves not merely censure, but punishment. He strikes at the existence of society, by disturbing its order, and destroying its interests. God, whose providence gave the allotments of

human life, rendered the poor dependent upon the rich, that the rich might have the honour of dispensing his bounty; and has so interwoven the interests of all, through all the gradations of society, that the meanest peasant is necessary to the most powerful prince;—and to separate from each other the different classes of which the community is composed, is to lay the axe at the root of the whole. To withhold the wages of the mechanic or of the labourer, is to be guilty of a fraud of the greatest magnitude: it is to retain that which is no longer our own;—another has earned it; and it is to palsy the arm of industry, by diminishing the hope, in proportion as we delay the hire of labour. This is often done thoughtlessly,—and is sometimes rendered necessary by extravagance. But he who languishes for lack of the bread which he is willing to earn by the sweat of his brow, is discouraged in his honest endeavours, and faints under that sickness of heart which arises from disappointment. “Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is by you kept back by fraud—crieth.” And the appeal, which finds no countenance on earth, is carried to the high court of heaven;—*there* it shall find redress: “And the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”—A third class of persons, infected by the love of the world, manifest it by their indulgences and dissi-

pation: "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth,
"and been wanton: ye have nourished your hearts,
"as in a day of slaughter." These are said to do
no harm: but it is imperative upon all men to do
good; and to do it according to their ability.
These are neither oppressive nor unfeeling; but
the same thoughtlessness pervades their negligence
and their bounty. They are satisfied with the
present world, and they care nothing for the future.
Such a character is to pass in review before you this
evening, in the parable of

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS*.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed
"in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously
"every day: And there was a certain beggar named
"Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and
"desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from
"the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came
"and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the
"beggar died, and was carried by the angels into
"Abraham's bosom: The rich man also died, and
"was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in
"torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Laza-
"rus in his bosom: And he cried and said, Father
"Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus,
"that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and
"cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

* Luke xvi. 19—31.

“ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in
“ thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and
“ likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is com-
“ forted, and thou art tormented. And besides all
“ this, between us and you there is a great gulf
“ fixed : so that they which would pass from hence
“ to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us that
“ would come from thence. Then he said, I pray
“ thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send
“ him to my father’s house ; For I have five
“ brethren : that he may testify unto them, lest
“ they also come into this place of torment.
“ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and
“ the prophets ; let them hear them. And he said,
“ Nay, father Abraham : but if one went unto
“ them from the dead, they will repent. And he
“ said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the
“ prophets, neither will they be persuaded though
“ one rose from the dead.”

Some doubt has been entertained, whether this singular and awful passage is to be considered as a *parable*, or as a *matter of fact*. It is most certainly unlike all our Lord’s other parables ; and in many particulars differs from the usual form of allegories. Parables are generally, almost exclusively, directed towards the elucidation of spiritual and eternal things, by shewing some analogy between them, and the constitution and course of nature. But here, natural objects are presented

in the shape of a narrative, and are carried forward, in all their consequences and events, into the future and invisible world : the veil of eternity is drawn aside ; and we are permitted to take a hasty and fearful glance at that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns, to describe it's features or to tell it's secrets. If this history be founded on any existing and well-known fact, it is however evident that the fact can reach no further than the description of two men, placed in very different circumstances, and exhibiting a very different character :—the future destiny of both must be considered, in this case, as revealed ; and this revelation as wearing the decorations of imagery as singular as it is impressive. Certain circumstances stated must be necessarily figurative ; although they certainly involve in them most important principles. There seems, however, to be no good reason for supposing the narrative to relate to any existing circumstances or persons ; but it appears to be a parable intended to delineate characters abounding in all ages, and to establish a sentiment pre-eminently useful and momentous. No name is employed relative to the prosperous individual : it is merely said, “ There was a certain rich man,”—a method of introducing a parable not uncommon with our Lord. Lazarus seems a title of universal application, arising out of the circumstances supposed, rather than of individuality ;

and signifies a *helpless person*. And, in addition to these presumptive considerations, it is certain that the Jews, in their *Gemara*, have a parable somewhat resembling this narrative of our divine Master. The amount of the evidence appears to be, upon the whole, that it is not in any sense a history, but altogether a parable. The *occasion* on which it was spoken seems less distinctly marked than is usual in such cases. The Evangelists seem anxious always to record the circumstances immediately bearing upon them, that we may the more readily apprehend the grand truth intended to be illustrated and enforced. But in this instance, the narrative commences with an abruptness which requires us to look back upon the argument from the beginning of the chapter, in order to decide the leading object of the parable; especially as the verse preceding it introduces a subject quite foreign to the occasion, and which another Evangelist places in a very different connection. The link of argument will then be found united with the unjust steward,—a parable avowedly spoken to teach us the right use of riches in an active employment of them; and which is enforced by some striking remarks of our Lord, at its conclusion, against covetousness. The Pharisees derided his admonitions; and their mockery called forth, on his part, some severe animadversions on their avarice, pride, and conceit;—and resuming, as it appears to me, the thread of

his former discourse on the snares of affluence, and the misapplication of wealth, he proceeds to shew, in this parable, that covetousness is not the only evil to be apprehended by the rich from the influence of prosperity: I am satisfied that the amiable and eloquent Bishop of Clermont*, in his most masterly and brilliant sermon on this subject, gives the parable it's true import, when he avails himself of it to undeceive those who imagine that only notorious crimes, such as profanity, impurity, injustice, and cruelty, deserve the punishment of hell; and that a life free from excesses of all kinds, tranquil and self-indulgent, is consistent with christianity. It is the great object of this distinguished prelate to prove, that a life spent in slothful ease—a life not devoted to the glory of God and the good of others, is most criminal in the sight of Deity: that it is not enough not to be vicious,—it is a great crime not to be active and useful. The christian's character is not negative, but positive; and *he* abuses *this* world, who is so ensnared by it as to neglect a *future* one. Among many important principles unfolded and illustrated, this is evidently the leading *sentiment* of the parable, That *an useless, luxurious, and dissipated life is displeasing to God, and destructive to the soul.* No distinct charge is brought against this unhappy man in the

* Massillon.

history: he is accused of no vices; he is not said to have been uncharitable or unfeeling; he is not said to have refused Lazarus what he desired, or to have denied him relief. The sufferance of such an object at his gate speaks even in his favour; nor is any accusation advanced against him of the sort, in the argument of Abraham. All that we can infer from the narrative is, that he lived luxuriously and delicately: and all that he is reminded of by the patriarch is, that he had already possessed his good things, and made them his portion. This, then, was his crime: he was satisfied with the present—he loved this world too well—he never inquired after a better country—he lived to himself—he was “a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God.” And is this charge nothing? Is it not criminal to neglect the salvation which Jesus died to purchase? Is it not criminal to live in the violation of the command, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world?”—for by what an awful representation is it followed! “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”—This, then, was his crime. Let the decent, and moral, and esteemed among men, who nevertheless live as though they were to remain here for ever, examine whether they are not in the same condemnation. Keeping this principle in view, as the grand sentiment to be illustrated, let us

examine a parable which presents us with such striking contrasts, and such important references.

I.—THE CONTRAST

between two individuals appears in their life, and in their death; and is even carried beyond the point where human cognizance ceases,—is exhibited in all the solemn realities of the future and eternal state.

1. *They are contrasted in their life.*—"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." In this there is nothing criminal. The dress and establishment of a man of rank and fortune may correspond with his circumstances, and, while society is benefited, the individual be unharmed by such an arrangement. Fine linen and purple were the usual appendages of affluence and nobility. The loom in which the Tyrian robe was woven, furnished many an artificer with daily bread; and the property so distributed, when not carried to excess, nor withheld from more important and pressing claims, is not lost. It is thus that the hungry are fed, and the industrious encouraged; and wealth flows in one of its most useful channels, when it diffuses itself to the various branches of trade and agriculture, and enables the man to earn that which is sweeter to him as the produce of his labour, than it could

be conferred as a gift. Had not this man made these things the business of his life, and the end of his existence, he had been commended, and not censured ; but “ where your treasure is, there will your heart be also : ” and he gave a melancholy demonstration, that these things constituted all his wealth, because they engrossed exclusively his affections. How many looked at him with envy ! how many sighed when they contrasted his abundance with their poverty ! how many judged of him, upon whom such things were bestowed with a profusion so munificent, as a favourite of heaven ! Let us see how these things terminate, before we venture to pronounce upon the dispensations of Providence.

“ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores ; and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table : moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.”—This is a picture of no common misery. It is not poverty ; but famine assailing the human person :—want and disease unite their baleful influence, to torture the body, and weigh down the noble and immortal spirit. What must be the state of that society, and of that church, which could suffer such a character to perish unrelieved, under such complicated calamities ? The Psalmist said, “ I have been young, and am now old : yet have I never seen

“the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread.”—“*Forsaken!*” the righteous never are, in any of the most cruel and extreme circumstances; and it had not fallen under the observation of the Royal penman, that he should beg his bread: yet Jesus shews that a state of absolute want and beggary was not incompatible with unquestionable piety. The public situation of Israel was much changed since the days of David; and the neglect and extinction of its provisions of mercy marked the national debasement. These are the monuments of the real greatness of a country;—and when these are suffered to fall, the spirit of religion is withdrawn. To Lazarus it was not given to *do* the will of God, for there was little or nothing within his power; but to *suffer* it, which marks christian obedience perhaps still more distinctly, and for which purpose afflictions are sent, and saints have often much to endure. The contrast between these men gives to the character and circumstances of each unspeakable force. It is this which sheds upon the one the full colouring of prosperity, like the warmth of an Italian sky at sun-set; and deepens upon the other the clouds of adversity, like the gloom which covered Egypt,—“a darkness which might be felt.” By contrast, all things are heightened: and for every rank in life to compare itself with others, would lead to humility and gratitude.

- “ Ah ! little think the gay, licentious proud,
“ Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround ;
“ They, who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
“ And wanton, often cruel, riot waste :
“ Ah ! little think they, while they dance along,
“ How many feel, this very moment, death,
“ And all the sad variety of pain.
“ How many sink in the devouring flood,
“ Or more devouring flame. How many bleed,
“ By shameful variance betwixt man and man.
“ How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms ;
“ Shut from the common air, and common use
“ Of their own limbs. How many drink the cup
“ Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
“ Of misery. Sore pierc’d by wintry winds,
“ How many shrink into the sordid hut
“ Of cheerless poverty. How many stand
“ Around the death-bed of their dearest friends,
“ And point the parting anguish. Thought fond man
“ Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills
“ That one incessant struggle render life,
“ One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate ;
“ Vice in his high career would stand appall’d,
“ And heedless rambling Impulse learn to think.”

The *characters* of those men were as dissimilar as their condition. We see the one enslaved by his circumstances, taking the cast of his mind from surrounding objects—enervated by prosperity : on the contrary, the other dignifies the most degraded situation, and, rising above his misery, sheds upon poverty the lustre of piety, resignation, peace, and devotion. It is unnecessary to ask

which is the greatest man,—the master of the palace, or the mendicant who was stretched at his gate, covered with ulcers, and suffering the pangs of hunger. The dogs increased his torment: and it conveys to us the conviction of his abject state to the last degree of extremity, when neither had he one friend to assist him, nor himself sufficient strength to repel these unconscious tormentors. To suffer pain or poverty singly is no small evil;—to sustain them both at once, requires support such as religion alone can bestow.

2. *They are contrasted in their death.*—“ And “ it came to pass, that the beggar died :...the rich “ man also died, and was buried.” In the event itself there was *no* contrast,—both alike arrived at the inevitable hour. The term of the poor man’s miseries was fixed; and Heaven, in pity to his sufferings, appears to have mercifully shortened them. He died first; died as he had lived—unlamented, perhaps unknown. It is not even said that any charitable hand performed the last offices, or bestowed upon him the rites of sepulture. To ancient nations, and to the Israelites no less than others, the want of these rites appeared an evil of no ordinary magnitude. Heathens supposed the spirit restless while the body remained unentombed; and believing Jews looked to the sepulchre of their family as a welcome retreat, when they should “ sleep with their fathers.” Even yet,

when the clearer views of christianity have taught us to look for our consolations beyond the grave, we are not wholly indifferent to this mortal frame: we visit with undefinable emotions the spot in which we have deposited the dust of our departed friends; and the mind seems still to repose with a melancholy pleasure upon the thought that we shall be buried in their grave, and lie by their side. It is the voice of nature; and religion respects and cherishes the feelings which it indicates.

While the mendicant was scarcely missed from the streets of Jerusalem and the gates of the palace, the master of the mansion was summoned to go the way whence he should not return. The condition of Lazarus, when connected with his hopes, rendered the message of death welcome to him. But was it equally so to the man who sat at ease in his possessions? Nothing is said of his dying moments;—for these are by no means conclusive evidences of character. Many distressing fears may haunt the couch of the expiring christian; and insensibility may shelter the mortal agonies of the sinner from the horrors of despair,—he may appear to die in peace. This was a point upon which the unbelief and impatience of the Psalmist fixed, when of such persons he said, “They have no bands in their death; neither are they plagued like other men.” The feelings in the article of death, like the circum-

stances of life, are sometimes far from being safe indications of the character of the departing, or of the state to which they are approaching. But it is distinctly said, "he was buried,"—interred with all the pomp and circumstance due to his rank, and customary on such mournful occasions; in which ostentation usurps the place of sorrow, and pride is more conspicuous, amidst the very shadows of death, than solemnity.

And this is *all* the difference! "After life's fitful fever," the beggar lies as soft, and sleeps as sound, as he. Poor distinctions! of which the immortal spirit is unconscious; or, if it be otherwise, in which it can take no pleasure, and which to the dishonoured body is solemn mockery. It is a melancholy spectacle, to see the herald stand at the brink of the grave of prostrated nobility or royalty, and, after proclaiming the evanescent titles of extinguished greatness over a lifeless mass—upon which the sentence "dust to dust" has been pronounced, and with which the worm is claiming kindred—break his staff, and resign his office. "The rich man died, and was buried:"—it was all his advantage; and this, as to fact, was a distinction totally unimportant and worthless.

3. *They are contrasted in their future state.* This is the point of real consequence; for it is an eternal and unchangeable state of being to which it relates. "The beggar died, and was carried

by the angels into Abraham's bosom." He who had no one to assist him living—no one to lament him dead—no friend to close his eyes, to prepare his grave, to cry at the parting moment, "Alas, my brother!"—finds the hierarchy of heaven, "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who are heirs of salvation;" and has guards to attend him, as he rises to take possession of his throne, the least of whom could wield the elements, and defeat the combined armies of the globe.

The expression, "Abraham's bosom," was well understood by those to whom our Lord addressed himself; as it was the usual term employed by the Jews to designate Paradise, or the state of happy separate spirits. That there is a beautiful and proper idea conveyed by it, will hereafter appear: at present it only is necessary to explain, that the figure is borrowed from the ancient mode of surrounding the table in a recumbent posture. A state of happiness has been commonly in the scriptures represented as a feast: "Blessed are they who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."—"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." These are passages familiar to your recollection; and whole parables, relative to the joys of heaven, have been framed upon this image. It is only necessary for you to remember, that the person who

reclined next another was said to lie in his bosom: this was the position of the apostle John in regard to Jesus; and this representation of Lazarus as occupying the next place to Abraham, was conferring upon him a station of distinguished honour, according to the image employed to shadow forth the future state, and the habits of the country from which it was borrowed. It is sufficient for our purpose to consider the import of this phrase, which exhibits him happy and reposing, abundantly recompensed for all his toils, and enjoying an eternal peace. "And I
" heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me,
" Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the
" Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit,
" that they may rest from their labours; and their
" works do follow them."

" The rich man also died, and was buried: and
" in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and
" seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his
" bosom."—The term "hell" usually signifies the state of separate spirits—the invisible world—the state into which we enter after death: sometimes, indeed, it signifies but the grave; and at others it intends the place of punishment for the impenitent. Here it seems to signify the state of separate spirits; while this state is represented as a state of bliss or of torment, according to the characters of the departed. We know nothing of

this state, but by revelation ; and it is described in general terms only. All that we can gather is, that as the spirit, however it may subsist as separate from the body, is happy or miserable alone, so the felicity or the torment shall be augmented when these are re-united ; and the sentence passed upon every man upon his departure from this world, and which is irrevocable, shall be publickly recognised at the day of judgment, and pronounced before the assembled universe.

For the first time we find character and circumstances agreeing,—and the last arising out of the former. Death strikes the balance, and equalises the good and evil. The future state, while it unfolds the purposes of providence, discovers its equity. There the moral government of God is justified. *That* is the state of rewards and punishments. Slow, but certain vengeance overtakes the offender there ; and the long-delayed reward crowns the perseverance, and recompenses the toils, of the christian. There every thing is reduced to order ; and that which now appears confused and irregular, shall be seen to arise from infinite wisdom, and to be regulated and accomplished by infinite power. The culprit who escapes justice, as we conclude now, is only respited,—a space is given him for repentance : if this be neglected or despised, “ a fiery indignation ” awaits him. The services which now

seem overlooked, are all registered in heaven, and shall all be rewarded, according to the inexhaustible liberality of God. Look at these examples: the one affluent, distinguished, having "in his life-time received his good things;" the other poor, despised, and labouring under innumerable evils:—but now, the one is comforted, the other tormented. Such are the contrasts:—now let us examine

II.—THE IMPORTANT INFERENCES PRESENTED IN THIS PARABLE.

1. *The general features of the future state are presented.* It is a state which commences *immediately* after death; otherwise there can be no propriety or fitness in these representations: for although the narrative is a parable, it is necessary that the figure should agree with the thing signified to render it a source of instruction. And that which is assumed in this singular and awful allegory, is to be clearly inferred from other passages, either of fact or of reasoning. Our Lord gave the dying thief an assurance, that he should be with him *that day* in Paradise,—the very same state of happiness for separate spirits, intended here by Abraham's bosom. St. Paul, "whether in the body," or "out of the body," he could not tell, was caught up "into the third heaven," where he saw and heard "things unutterable:" the state and its joys are, therefore, at present

inaccessible to us, and inconceivable by us. But this fact seemed to have made a lasting impression upon the apostle, to have awakened his desires, and, in some instances, influenced his reasoning, when he said, "For me to live, is Christ; and to die, is gain;"—but death could be no gain, if it were the suspension of consciousness;—and represented himself as "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better;"—but to be with Christ, his grand object, were impossible, if the spirit slept with the body in the grave until the resurrection. Moses and Elias exist somewhere; for they re-appeared on earth, when they conversed with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration,—and that in a happy state, for they were seen by the disciples in circumstances of great splendour on that occasion.

This blissful state is presented to us under a beautiful and endearing form, as a *social* state. Abraham is there; and, doubtless, not Abraham and Lazarus alone, but all the glorified saints. There is it promised by Jesus, "They shall come "from the east and the west, and shall sit down "with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the "kingdom of God." There the great assembly is collected; and all the departed are there,—patriarchs, and prophets, and martyrs, and the fathers—men whose characters have excited our admiration—whose sufferings have established

our faith—whose achievements have stimulated our activity—whose zeal and piety have fired our devotion; we shall see them, and become their happy associates. And, oh! you who have scattered the dust over all that was most precious to you in life—who have felt the ties of this mortal existence bursting one by one, under the hand of death, until none are left—approach the awful, pleasing state of future being; and receive here all whom you have lost, restored to you free from imperfection, and in the full bliss and beauty of immortality. “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

The future state is to some a state of inconceivable *torment*. It is represented as arising from two sources,—the endurance of dreadful inflictions, and the perception of lost happiness. What a terrible picture of the misery of the sinner in an eternal state is drawn in this parable! A man passing at once from the bosom of luxury, the couch of ease, the tenour of a soft and unruffled life, into ineffable torture—“And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.” Those who wear titles, or who dispense them—who are called gods, and rank with princes—are exposed to this terrible conclusion of a life which men deem glorious, and of a lot which they regard with envy, and almost worship with idolatry. Oh! what a change must it be, from every thing that

can gratify the appetite, indulge the passions, soothe the feelings, feed the pride of man, to such a world of woe as this! What a passage for the spirit of a debauched and wicked monarch, from the flatteries and splendours of a court, to the tribunal of God, and a prison of despair! And what would be the horror of those who survive, to occupy their rank, revel in their possessions, and run to the same excess of riot, could they distinguish the well-known voice of the companion of their former guilt, perhaps their seducer in early life, from the mingled cries of despair, and hear him say, "I am tormented in this flame!"—Whatever be intended by this fire, we are sure it represents torment, and that of an extreme nature;—a torment increased by the sight also of lost happiness. It is a very ancient opinion, that the states of happiness and misery are so near, as to afford at least an occasional view of each other. Here, however, the sentiment is confirmed by Him who knows what they are; and the misery of the lost appears in no small degree to arise from their knowledge of the felicity which they have forfeited. This melancholy state is irrevocable—an "*impassable gulf*:" an eternal barrier separates them from the joys of heaven:—they may see, but they must not taste. *Remembrance* and *remorse* wring their dregs into this bitter cup. The remembrance of the good which they possessed and

abused; the remembrance of the privileges which they enjoyed, and which they neglected and despised; the remembrance of the example which they set,—which continues to operate after their death, and which will bring down increasing ruin upon their heads. This appears to be the real motive of the request proposed by this unhappy man, that his brethren might be warned. He who seduces the young into the paths of vice, cannot lead him back into those of virtue. He can poison the springs of existence:—to heal them, is beyond his power. If he repent himself, he cannot repair the mischief which he has done; nor be assured that his reformed example will counteract his evil one. In these regions of despair, no means were left him to remove the impressions which his life had made: and so convinced was he of the inveteracy of evil habits, that he deemed nothing likely to work upon them, short of the rising of one from the dead, whom they had known, to warn them from the world of spirits. He shuddered at the anticipated increase of that, which was already intolerable, and incapable of a moment's respite or alleviation; and which he expected, from the accession of those to his misery, whom he had ruined by his example.

This was denied him. The sufficiency of the scriptures was affirmed;—and justly so: for sup-

ported as they are by the most incontrovertible evidences, the mind which can bring itself to resist these would be inaccessible to demonstrations of the most miraculous order : and, in point of fact, although Jesus *did* raise the dead, and himself rise on the third day, the Jews believed not on him. Probably to this fact he refers, when he thus closes the parable : “ If they hear not “ Moses and the prophets, neither will they be “ persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

And for what are you waiting?—Some warning voice to sound from the grave? Some midnight hand to draw your curtain? Some suffering spirit, from the invisible world, to pass before your eyes, and bring conviction by a spectacle which could not be endured? You have all that you ask here. Jesus has drawn aside the veil, and uttered the warning voice. No other admonitions shall be given. If these be neglected, there remaineth only “ a fearful looking-for of “ judgment, and of fiery indignation which shall “ devour the adversary.” Learn, from these, your duties and your destiny: learn so to discharge the one, as to secure the other : learn so to use the things which are temporal, as not to lose finally those which are eternal.

LECTURE XIII.

THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.

LUKE XVIII. 9.

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.

EVERY human being entertains, in a greater or less degree, an opinion of his own value and importance. Every man flatters himself, although there are millions existing at the same moment, that his own life is of consequence to society: and, unconvinced by the sight of thousands daily falling into the shades and the silence of the grave, whose removal resembles the casting of a pebble into a river, which, as it sinks to the bottom, causes a few undulations on the surface, but impedes not for an instant the course of the stream, he yet believes that *he* shall be missed among the crowd of his contemporaries, and that his name will be rescued, for a season at least, from oblivion. Another generation in the meanwhile arises: the individual who died yesterday

is forgotten : he has “ perished without any regarding it ;” and the “ place which knew him, knows him no longer.” Scarcely surviving in the recollection of his immediate successors, his more remote posterity, if perchance they hear of him at all, place his life, in their imagination, with the years beyond the flood. To past time, exceeding our individual cognizance, there is no definite idea attached ; and the event which transpired but a day before our consciousness, is to us as the beginning of days. In the fall of the individual, the shock is felt for a season by his family, but extends not beyond the immediate sphere of his connections ; and when the earth is strewn over him, sorrow gradually abates its influence. Time, which inflicted the suffering, produces the remedy ; and life resumes its empire, till we ourselves become what we deplored. It is mortifying to our pride to reflect, that in our own removal another bubble on the stream of existence will burst—a momentary emotion be excited, to subside in the same apathy and oblivion.

It is impossible to examine human nature, without perceiving that selfishness extends its domination over the character, and deeply influences every better principle. Propose to the individual any pursuit which he judges will be favourable to his interests : suggest any scheme

by which his fame may be promoted and his possessions increased: with what eagerness will he embrace it! with what unwearied assiduity will he prosecute it! with what energy and zeal will he defend it! Remove these powerful incitements, presenting him the same scheme, fraught with the same important consequences, involving in it the same general utility: it would be too much to assume that he would abandon, or be totally indifferent to it;—this would argue a want of principle indeed; but it would lose, in his estimation, much of its attraction; his approbation would be cold, and his concern for its ultimate success comparatively abated. But if this same scheme should be found in any measure hostile to his interests, in his apprehension—if it diminish his importance, or obstruct a single channel among the thousand through which his wealth flows—what becomes of his patriotism? Whatever be the usefulness of the plan to the general interest, he closes his eyes upon its worth—is deaf to every representation of its excellence—is insensible to its claims—and obstinately maintains his own selfishness, to the inconvenience, and even injury, of those who surround him. It is not intended to affirm, that there are no disinterested spirits, who prefer the public weal to individual advantage; but we maintain, that such generous minds have obtained

a victory over themselves, and that the tendencies of human nature are not counteracted without conflict and resolution.

On similar principles may we account for the satisfaction with which every man regards his own talents, and exertions, and character. He is ever ready to pronounce his own eulogium, and applaud his own performances. His vanity stands prepared for all the incense which flattery can offer: and if he will not publickly appear in the form of a panegyrist to himself, his heart echoes every plaudit of others, and whispers encomiums still more enthusiastic to his secret approbation. He looks too often upon his brother with a jealous, envious eye: he hates the splendour of another's character or powers, lest it should eclipse his own: he deems every commendation misplaced, which falls not upon himself. We all know that this is human nature; that to a certain degree every man is thus influenced; that these unworthy emotions are sometimes felt by the christian himself; and that the best of men are not proof, under all circumstances, against their baneful ascendancy, because they are *but* men.

This same unhappy disposition to over-rate ourselves, and undervalue others—this proud fear of obligation—enters into our most sacred feelings; opposes itself to the grace of the gospel; urges the man to attempt a justification

of himself before God; and induces him, rejecting the righteousness of Christ, to "go about to establish one of his own." Such an unhappy character is exposed in the subject selected for our meditations this evening; and it's principal features are more strongly marked from the contrast subsisting between *it*, and a spirit truly awakened to a sense of it's guilt and misery before God. This perfect delineation is to be found in the parable of

THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.

The general subject is *prayer*: upon *it* the Saviour founds the test of character, in the principal representation to pass under review. And in regard to this privilege and duty, he recommends importunity, patience, and humility;—each of these constituting the subject of a separate parable, and one of them in immediate connection with that which is to form the substance of the present discourse. "And he spake a parable
"unto them to this end, that men ought always
"to pray, and not to faint: saying, There was in
"a city a judge, which feared not God, neither
"regarded man: And there was a widow in that
"city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge
"me of mine adversary. And he would not for
"a while: but afterward he said within himself,
"Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet,

“because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth*?”

We can feel no doubt respecting the *sentiment* of this parable: it is, that *we should employ importunity and perseverance in the exercises of devotion*. “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” Not that we can be always in the *act* of prayer, but that we should always cultivate the spirit of prayer; and not fail to refer all our wants and desires, all our hopes and fears, all our duties and circumstances, to God. The duty of prayer is here taken for granted: the privilege of prayer is expressed; its objects being, the supply of our wants, and the redress of our grievances.

In stating this duty, our Lord takes an extreme case, and exhibits a character as unlike the Deity as possible,—an unjust and unprincipled magistrate, “who neither feared God, nor regarded man;” who paid no attention to the principles of eternal right established in the moral government of God, and prescribed in his

* Luke xviii. 1—8.

revealed law—nor pitied the misery of the oppressed—nor respected the property, feelings, and liberties of others. Woe to the “city” which has such, “a judge !” An unprincipled magistrate, in a free state may find means to evade the law : but in Eastern countries, where the law is in the bosom of the ruler, and he is clothed with an absolute authority, such an officer must be a scourge indeed. Let it be remembered, however, that the eyes of the Judge of the whole earth are upon a corrupt magistracy ; and that He who shall preside at a tribunal from which is no appeal, will not fail severely to punish every act of injustice, and every neglect of duty. Nor is the responsibility confined to inferior magistrates ;—monarchs are as amenable to this bar as the most inconsiderable ministers of justice ; and their conduct shall be scrutinized with a severity proportionate to their power and influence. “Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed ; ye judges of the earth.”

Under this partial and cruel administration a poor widow suffered,—not, as it should seem, by the hand of the “judge,” but from some “adversary,” who, availing himself of her helpless and bereaved situation, and secure of escaping justice when it’s rod of power was placed in such hands, in some way oppressed her. This magistrate was as truly implicated in this wrong as though he

had personally committed it: for he who, armed with authority, permits an injury, or refuses to redress it, is as culpable in the sight of God as the criminal himself: he is "a partaker of other men's sins;" and is accountable for all the consequences of their outrage, and of his own indifference. Government is confided to man, that he may be "a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well." He who neglects or prostitutes his office, shall be punished by the "Lord of all power" and dominion.

The plea of this widow appears not only importunate, but vindictive—"Avenge me of mine adversary." Her address, however, as it is expressed in the original, does not justify such a conclusion. It is rather, "Right me*,"—"Do me justice:"—unable herself to resist, she demands the sanction of the existing authority. "And he would not:" there was no bribe in her hand to purchase his favour—no force at her controul to support her claims. Either sustained by the vigour of a superior mind, which gathered courage from delay; or impelled by increasing injuries; she had the fortitude to renew her solicitations with growing importunity: until her perseverance conquered his reluctance and indifference, and made him yield that to secure his

* ἐκδίκησόν με.

tranquillity, which she could not have hoped from his justice.

Upon this statement our Lord founds an argument, arising out of the very contrast between this unjust judge, and the Judge of the whole earth. He frequently did this with matchless effect. When he represented God as a *Father*, he did it. He appealed to parental feelings; and at the same time enumerated parental infirmities. He blended with our affections, our caprice, our ignorance, our passions, our inability: yet the love which struggled with all these also surmounted them, and enabled us to secure the welfare of our children to the full extent of our power. "If, then," said he, "ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him!" Here is a common principle, strengthened and established by a contrast of character. The same appears in this passage, representing God as a Judge. "And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily." Shall importunity compel to justice a magistrate regardless of all its rights? and shall not God, who has prescribed prayer as the

means of approaching him, hear and approve his own people in their obedience to his command? Judgment is indeed delayed, to give the guilty space for repentance: but not a petition on the part of the christian is lost: and the stroke which avenges them, however delayed, shall fall suddenly, because unexpectedly, upon their enemies at last.

The application of this parable to his disciples, seems to be intended to support them under the persecutions which they were about to be called to suffer—the sharpness and duration of which would almost be sufficient to shake their faith, and overwhelm their spirits. Martyrs are represented—even “the souls of them who were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held”—as crying “with a loud voice, and saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true! dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” These were appeased by the prospect that the reign of tyranny and persecution was short; that “in a little season” the sufferings of “their brethren should be fulfilled;” and then, the retribution of justice should appear. Thus these disciples were forewarned, that their afflictions should be so sharp as to shake their confidence. “Nevertheless,” although I have so armed you against evil, by shewing that your prayers are heard, and

your tears treasured up against that evil day to your adversaries, when your cause shall be vindicated—*when* that day arrives, “when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” or, *in the land*?—shall he not rather find cause to repeat his reproof, “O ye of little faith! wherefore did ye doubt?”

To a similar purport, he spake another parable. “And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him: And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” The sentiment here is, that *we should not be discouraged by delay*. The former parable laid a stress upon the Divine character, as contrasted with that of the unrighteous magistrate: this appears to shew the impropriety

of yielding to difficulties, and of gathering repulses from unanswered prayers. Both of them, and alike, enforce the necessity of a persevering application to the throne of grace, in the genuine spirit of faith and devotion.

In this last allegorical representation, a comparison seems to take place of the contrast produced in the former. A "*friend*" is solicited—but a friend encompassed with infirmity. He *sleeps*;—nature requires refreshment, and demands repose, "The Keeper of Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth." He is solicited to "*lend*," and will expect repayment. "God giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." He intimates that the *time is unseasonable*; and "answers from within, Trouble me not." The Deity deems no time unseasonable—He is a God nigh, and not afar off—more ready to hear, than we are to pray. He even demands it as a duty that we should "be careful for nothing: "but in all things, by prayer and supplication, "make known our requests unto him." His *door is shut*; but the throne of grace is always accessible, and the frequency of our approach is never censured: our reluctance to avail ourselves of this privilege is often condemned. He yields at last "*because of his importunity*:" but God, who always entertains purposes of mercy, delays his grants no longer than is necessary to ourselves; and always chooses the right method and time of

bestowing his bounty. Thus the very comparison becomes, in point of fact, a contrast, from the nature of the case.

The grand design of the parable is of inconceivable moment to us. Feeble in our devotions, weak in our faith, circumscribed in our knowledge, we are easily discouraged. We resign the petition as lost, which is not instantly answered, and answered in our own way. But here is an absolute promise, given from the lips of the Saviour himself, and unconditional as to the individuals to whom it is applied. It concerns not the disciples alone, but all men—all, who feel the need of divine assistance, and of divine supplies. And to *all* it says, "Ask, and ye shall receive: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you." It seems unnecessary to observe, that without employing the means prescribed we can never enjoy the blessing promised: but it may be of importance to remind you, that in the use of those means, we must regard the spirit, and obey the admonition of these parables—to unite with prayer, importunity, perseverance, patience, and humility. The last will be found intimately connected with the subject remaining to be discussed. "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the

“ other a Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed
 “ thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am
 “ not as other men are, extortioners, unjust,
 “ adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice
 “ in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
 “ And the Publican, standing afar off, would not
 “ lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but
 “ smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful
 “ to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down
 “ to his house justified rather than the other: for
 “ every one that exalteth himself shall be abased;
 “ and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*.”

The opening of this parable leaves no possible
 doubt as to its *sentiment*: it is, that *a self-righteous
 spirit cannot be accepted before God*: and it becomes,
 therefore, a question of no small concern to us,
 wherein it consists? and how it may be subdued?
 The first inquiry is consistent with that holy jea-
 lousy which we ought to exercise over ourselves;
 while it is answered by the parable. The second is
 of the greater importance; as all will be found, in
 effect, guilty of the charge.

“ Two men went up into the temple *to pray*.”
 Different as these persons were in character and in
 station, in one point they agreed—the necessity and
 obligation of prayer. It remained to these latter
 days to set the prescription at defiance, or to treat it
 with

* Luke xviii. 9—14.

total neglect. With different views, and influenced by various and even opposite motives, men always prayed: their temper and spirit determined whether the oblation was sincere or hypocritical; and they were recompensed accordingly:—but still they kept up the observance, and never thought of separating the form of devotion from the profession of religion. But now, professors are not ashamed to let us know that they have no closet for retirement—no altar for the family—no stated season for worship. Every thing is abandoned, except the temple: and we fear even for this,—may we not fear justly? when religion has lost it's hold both upon the heart and the house. The spirit of religion cannot subsist without prayer: for this obvious reason,—God has promised to supply it's wants only in the exercise of this duty. Had we seen these “*two men*” ascending the hill which led to “the Temple,” we should have discovered no difference between them. They were both men—both were decent in their external deportment—both professed the same object. They were avowedly worshippers of God—worshippers at the same hour, and in the same house of prayer. But He, to whose feet they came, regarded them not as they were seen of men: his eyes are as a flame of fire; and while the multitude looked upon the outward appearance, he examined the heart. At once the veil was withdrawn—they appeared “naked and open before him,” as they really were;

and stood confessed "in the light of his countenance." The same eyes are upon this assembly. To look round upon this congregation, no external difference appears between one worshipper and another. All are attentive,—all are serious,—all are paying a professed homage to God and to his ordinances. But the discrimination between man and man is making now, and the judgment is actually pronounced with infallible certainty upon each individual. He hides from all but himself "a naked human heart:" from him it is never concealed.

"The one was a Pharisee, and the other a Publican." The Pharisees were a sect well known, and highly esteemed: they made high pretensions to superior sanctity, and observed with a ceremonious scrupulosity the traditions of the elders. The Publican was a man whose office rendered him obnoxious, while it laid him under many temptations to vice. He was a tax-gatherer; a person who collected, or more properly *farmed*, the Roman tribute—abhorrent to the Jews, as it reminded them that they were no longer an independent nation: and his occupation induced him to grasp, with a covetous and remorseless avidity, whatever could be secured, to make a fortune by exaction. If human penetration had been employed to determine the character, and to award the recompence of each, it would doubtless have yielded the palm

of excellence to the one whom God rejected,—and, judging from the surface, would have entertained the public veneration for the character of the Pharisee, and the common abhorrence of that of the Publican.

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus within himself: God! I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” Can we call *this* prayer? It must surely be thus denominated by courtesy: yet he deemed it prayer. How many insults are offered to God under the pretext of serving him! This vain man came not to the temple to worship God, but to flatter himself. He stood, and enumerated the performances of his hands. When we read down the list, there does not appear any thing in it to condemn, except the spirit in which it was recorded. Many an action, good in itself, becomes evil in consequence of the motives which induce it. Read the catalogue of his virtues once again; and it will be found that there does not appear any thing in it which should excite a spirit of self-applause. Upon his own estimate of it, to what did his righteousness amount? Simply to this, — he abstained from oppression and gross vices. And is human nature so degraded, that a man’s not being an “extortioner, and unjust, and an adulterer,” should be

deemed sufficient ground for boasting and self-complacency, and that in the solemn hour of prayer? It is even so:—and thus, from the mouth of a Pharisee himself, and from his applause of his own life, we establish the position of the scriptures respecting the reality and extent of original depravity: “They are *all* gone out of the way: they are “together become abominable: there is none that “doeth good, no not one.” But he adds some instances of active obedience. It was, that twice in the week he submitted to a little external humiliation; and that of the first-fruits of his land, or of the firstlings of his flock, he brought a sacrifice to the Lord. And *this* is all! And this he deems sufficient not only to satisfy the demands of justice, but more than sufficient to give him freedom of access to God, and to purchase the crown of heaven. When a man sets aside the system of salvation by grace, and attempts to establish it upon his own merits, his leading error lies at the commencement of his scheme;—it regards both God and himself: he forms a false estimate of the Divine character, and of his own. He deems himself holier than he is; and he concludes that the perfections of the Deity are less than he will find them to be.

“And the Publican, standing afar off, would not “lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven: but “smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful

“to me a sinner!” Mark his *attitude*. He “stands afar off,”—in the court of the Gentiles, as unworthy to enter the sacred inclosure. A child, conscious of having offended a parent, and anxious for reconciliation, does not rush with daring impetuosity into his father’s presence; but waits at a humble distance, till the paternal smile shall encourage him, or the well-known voice command him to approach nearer. He “would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven;”—he saw there only purity, which exposed his own vileness,—compassion, which he had slighted,—or a tempest of indignation, which he had caused to gather.

Mark his *prayer*. There were no exuberant, unmeaning expressions—no pomp of sentiment, and parade of diction—no cold, unfeeling declamation: he prayed as a man awakened to a sense of his guilt and danger; he prayed as a man persuaded that he held communion with one who read the heart: he prayed as a man who supplicated for his life: his petitions did not freeze upon his lips; they came warm from his heart, and in ‘winged words’ which sought and reached the throne of God. His short and comprehensive petition is at once a pattern to us; and discovers that Divine Spirit, by whom the sentiment was inspired, and the supplication framed.

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one

“that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he
“that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” This
is the language of one who could not be mistaken
on the subject,—it is the declaration of “God
that justifieth.” *He* sends the Pharisee empty
away—unheard, unaccepted, unsanctified. The
closing sentiment in favour of humiliation, appears
to be one which our Lord was peculiarly anxious to
inculcate ; and thence we may gather its import-
ance. It is produced no less than three times in
the same words, and very frequently is enforced
in terms a little varied.

The parable having detected and denounced the
spirit of self-righteousness, it now behoves us to
examine how it works, and how it may be coun-
teracted.

It's most glaring operation is, to *withdraw our
dependence* from the Redeemer, and to place it
upon ourselves, for acceptance and salvation.
Behold a man secure in the opinion of his own
safety, and blessing God that he is not in the
situation of other men. This high opinion of our
own righteousness arises principally from a mis-
taken view of the righteousness of God. Such men
magnify their own obedience beyond all proportion ;
and imagine that the requisitions of the divine law
are less spiritual than they evidently are, or that
these will be conceded and bowed to the exigencies
of their imperfections. They blot out from their

creed the attributes of justice, purity, and truth ; and demand the exercise of mercy in a way which has never been promised, and which could not be adopted without destroying the perfections of the Divine character. The combination of these two erroneous notions produces a self-righteous spirit, in it's most awful extent.

An attempt to *blend human and divine operations* is another disclosure of this temper of mind. Some are found to admit that the death of Christ is essential to their salvation, and that Divine assistance is necessary to their ultimate success. They lay the foundation in themselves, and bring forth the top-stone in Christ. They begin in the flesh, and would end in the Spirit. These think it necessary that they should commence the work of grace in their own hearts ; but are willing to allow, that the Spirit of God should co-operate with them, and even that he should supply their deficiencies : but they will by no means agree that the work is divine, from the first impulse to the final consummation. They deem it essential that they should themselves do all that they can ; and then conclude that they have a sort of claim upon the Deity, to do that for them which they cannot do for themselves. This is reversing the scriptural rule ; and representing God as loving us, because we first loved him. With more of modesty in the pretension, there is not less of self-righteousness in the spirit of this scheme.

A degree of self-righteousness *attaches to the christian*. In him, it is most difficult to be detected, and to be overcome. To this spirit he owes his fears and his bondage. He regards his master's service too frequently as a duty, rather than a privilege ; and he engages in it as though he were purchasing his salvation by his performances. Under such impressions, he has all the slavish fears of the Pharisees, and must suffer their disappointment. Even christians are too apt to over-rate their services for God. Success does not always produce merely satisfaction: the sensation excited is more,—it is pride, self-approbation, presumption ; and paternal chastisement becomes necessary, to restore our spirit to a just tone of feeling. Our services are always of little worth ; yet we not unfrequently lay great stress upon them. What are our prayers and praises to Him, “ who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, “ and clotheth himself with light as with a “ garment ? ” Ten thousand thousand worlds may perish, and he feels not the shock. Before he called them into being, there was no blank in his happiness: he has the power to annihilate them with a look: and when they shall be consumed before the brightness of his coming, his glory and felicity shall remain undiminished and independent.

We may detect a self-righteous spirit, in the disposition to *compare ourselves with others*, for

the purpose of elevating ourselves, and degrading them. Behold it in the example of the Pharisee—“ God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are —not even as this Publican!” And who gave that proud man permission to draw this parallel between himself and yonder broken-hearted penitent? “ Why dost thou despise thy brother? And why dost thou set at nought thy brother?”—And it is not true. He is as morally diseased as his companion, and more remote from the cure: for the Publican feels it, and is applying to the great Physician; while he, conscious of no malady, will not accept of the remedy provided. When a christian draws a comparison between himself and others, it is to humble himself, by regarding their attainments and his own infirmities; and if, perchance, a rebel against God, a wanderer from the fold of heaven, passes by him, and forces upon him a comparison to his own advantage, he uses it as a motive of gratitude to the grace which has distinguished and saved him. Other comparisons than those which minister to thankfulness and humility are the melancholy indications of a self-righteous spirit.

To *guard* against this evil and destructive principle, it is necessary that we should implore the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, to discover us to ourselves; that we should frequently and constantly consult the scriptures of truth, respecting

our own ruin; and the redemption effected by the death of Christ, as the only provision of mercy—the only hope set before us in the gospel; that we should diligently compare the features of our own character with the general testimony of inspired truth, relative to the corruption of human nature; and that we should live in the exercise of constant prayer, and of the most unremitting vigilance. And then, when we have employed all these means, to detect and expel this odious temper,—because we are ourselves liable to be deceived, or to deal too tenderly with our own infirmities,—let us approach with the Publican the throne of grace, and say to Him that sitteth thereon, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” “Who can understand his errors?” “Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant, also, from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me: So shall I be upright; I shall be innocent from the great transgression.” “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

LECTURE XIV.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

JOHN X. 11.

I am the good Shepherd.

UPON pastoral scenery, in all ages, the mind has rested for pleasure and repose. The imagination has constantly adverted to the quietude of its occupations, as suited to tranquillity of spirit: and perhaps the error has been in supposing that it could *produce* that temper to which it is unquestionably so adapted. But "the mind is its own place;" and its dispositions can make a heaven of hell—a hell of heaven. We are less affected by the local scenes, than they are influenced by the state of the passions and of the principles. Whenever the poet has fancied his golden age, he has always laid his descriptions among pastoral objects. These, besides their matchless beauty, have been supposed to be more free from vice than duties more active, because more removed from those temptations which usually assail human passions. This is another

grand error. The corruption of human nature is seated in the heart, and adapts itself to whatever circumstances attach to the individual. The vices of obscure life are necessarily less obvious, but they are not less extensive than those of a sphere more elevated and more active : they differ in their character, but they are equally criminal in their kind. Solitude has proved, not unfrequently, the nursery of the most terrible crimes : and a station which excludes a man from the temptations of example, consigns him to the pernicious and unrestrained influence of his own depraved passions. Innocence is not necessarily attached to obscurity, nor vice to public scenes : both have their peculiar solicitations ; and man is always in danger—in the city and in the field—in society and in retirement. Let him look for the enemy within, and set a guard over his heart,—and rely upon Divine assistance, and preserve the consciousness of the Divine presence,—and every station becomes sanctified :—without such impressions and such aids, none are safe. Yet, because of the repose associated with such scenery, the country has always been considered the retreat of virtue, and the asylum of age. Every man, engaged in the business of life, builds in his imagination a cottage for the evening of his days, where he can retire unseen and undisturbed ; and in the bosom of nature converse with the God of

nature, and prepare to leave the world for heaven : —the landscape which his fancy has drawn, cheers him amidst the toils of life, and is delightful from it's contrast with the turmoil in which he is engaged ;—and over the work of his imagination, Hope diffuses her mildest, richest colouring. What, though the day-dream is never realized ; it produces it's effect ;—it lightens the burden, and tempers the heat of the day : it consoles, while it amuses :—no injury is done, because no increase of difficulty is added to toil and industry : but a real benefit is conferred, by calling the attention from present circumstances, whose difficulties might overwhelm resolution, and whose pressure might break the spirit.

Yet is pastoral scenery always delightful, notwithstanding too much has been expected from it, and too much imputed to it. The poet brings his warrior from fields of blood and the noise of camps, and stretches him under the shadow of the spreading beech, to melt the vain and frightful dreams of ambition into the stillness of nature, and to watch the lengthening of the evening shadows, as they fall from the summits of the mountains upon the vales sleeping at their bases. Still, notwithstanding the abuses of solitude,

“ God made the country ; and man made the town.”

The characters of a Divine hand are impressed upon

the face of the whole creation; and the still small voice of nature makes its way to the heart, prepared by religion to listen with attention, and to receive it with cordiality. Retirement is favourable to reflection, self-examination, and devotion. "Isaac went out into the field at eventide to meditate." Upon a mind so prepared and so occupied, the twilight shed tranquillity, and the whispering air breathed peace.

The simplicity of former times made these combinations neither incongruous nor unusual. It was not the imagination of the poet alone which surrounded the warrior with rural scenery. The earliest and noblest champions of Rome, in her best days, retired from the field where they had fought her battles, to cultivate their farms. They were not ashamed to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. They drew their sword only for the defence of their country and their liberties; and when peace sheathed it, they turned it into the plough-share. Hands which wielded the truncheon of command held the reaping-hook; and commanders who led armies to victory resumed the estimable character of peaceable citizens. The wealth of monarchs was derived from their flocks; and the daughters of kings did not disdain to feed their sheep. They received the assistance of their servants, but did not think of separating themselves from domestic or pastoral duties.

From the sheep-fold David was taken to be the king of Israel: "From following the ewes great
"with young, God brought him to nourish Jacob
"his people: so he fed them according to the
"integrity of his heart, and guided them by the
"skilfulness of his hands."

When we connect the simplicity of ancient manners with the scenery and occupations of the Jewish people, we cannot wonder at the frequent references made to pastoral life in the scriptures. The most interesting religious subjects are conveyed to us in this form. Even the character of the Deity is delineated with matchless effect under this image. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie
"down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the
"still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me
"in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
"shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art
"with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort
"me*." It is impossible to conceive of any description more touching or more beautiful. At once, all the terror which we might connect with the attributes of the Divinity is removed, by the office which he is represented as sustaining,—
"The Lord is my *shepherd*." The duties devolving upon this office, and the tenderness

* Ps. xxiii. 1—4.

requisite to it, are gracefully portrayed, and would be fully comprehended by the meanest capacity in that age and country. A disposition to support those whom he took under his protection, is here combined with ability: and out of this combination the most rational confidence is deduced,—“*I shall not want.*” Suitable pasturage is prepared; and gentle, but decisive, direction guides us to it, and preserves us in it. The disposition to wander is observed; and the helplessness in danger provided against. He guides by his wisdom, and restores by his power: and in the frightful hour of impending danger, or approaching dissolution, he sustains and comforts his people. In conformity with the image selected, these circumstances are represented as a deep, gloomy defile, through which the flock is to pass,—a valley overshadowed by hills, and excluding the light of day: the pastoral crook is in the hand of the shepherd, to extricate from danger, and to guide in darkness;—the rod is to direct; the staff is to support or defend. In this awful moment we require to be encouraged, consoled, and sustained. The strength of nature fails—the visions of time dissolve—the fears of eternity surround us. Then the great are unenvied, and the criminal is abhorred: his distinctions no longer conceal or sanctify his vices. In that hour the poorest man would not endure his conscience to be possessor of his crown. Then friendship is unavailing;—

sighs and tears, embalming the body, afford no succour to the mind. In this war is no discharge; the warrior must fight—and must fight alone: and if he will be victorious, he must employ strength not his own. Through this dreadful valley the sheep must pass: but the Shepherd is with him; and the care and tenderness which followed him through his journey shall not forsake him at it's close.

Under this beautiful image, both the prophets and the apostles exhibit the duties of ministers of religion towards the people of their charge. With a master's hand, Ezekiel shews the misery of a flock, the shepherds of which feed themselves, and are careless of their trust;—of a people, whose spiritual instructors are indifferent to their immortal interests: and in terms as awful as they are affecting, he denounces the wrath of God, the great Shepherd, against these subordinate and faithless pastors, who neglected their duty. “And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have

“ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed
“that which was sick, neither have ye bound up
“that which was broken, neither have ye brought
“again that which was driven away, neither have
“ye sought that which was lost ; but with force
“and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And
“they were scattered, because there is no shep-
“herd : and they became meat to all the beasts
“of the field when they were scattered. My
“sheep wandered through all the mountains, and
“upon every high hill : yea, my flock was scat-
“tered upon all the face of the earth, and none
“did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye
“shepherds, hear the word of the Lord ; As I
“live, saith the Lord God, surely because my
“flock became a prey, and my flock became meat
“to every beast of the field, because there was
“no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search
“for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves,
“and fed not my flock ; Therefore, O ye shep-
“herds, hear the word of the Lord ; Thus saith
“the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shep-
“herds ; and I will require my flock at their
“hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the
“flock ; neither shall the shepherds feed them-
“selves any more : for I will deliver my flock
“from their mouth, that they may not be meat
“for them. For thus saith the Lord God, Be-
“hold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and

“ seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his
“ flock in the day that he is among his sheep that
“ are scattered ; so will I seek out my sheep, and
“ will deliver them out of all places where they
“ have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.
“ And I will bring them out from the people, and
“ gather them from the countries, and will bring
“ them to their own land, and feed them upon
“ the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all
“ the inhabited places of the country. I will feed
“ them in a good pasture, and upon the high
“ mountains of Israel shall their fold be : there
“ shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture
“ shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.
“ I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to
“ lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that
“ which was lost, and bring again that which was
“ driven away, and will bind up that which was
“ broken, and will strengthen that which was
“ sick ; but I will destroy the fat and the strong ; I
“ will feed them with judgment*.” We might
challenge the most admired writers of antiquity to
produce a figurative delineation equal to this, in
grandeur of design, and in unity of imagery.
But the most important point is, the fidelity and
success with which it exposes the curse attending
a corrupted priesthood—the last and greatest evil

* Ezekiel xxxiv. 1—16.

which can befall a nation—at once the certain source and presage of it's ruin. It is a political calamity of no despicable magnitude :—but what a horrible prospect of destruction lies before such unhallowed ministers, in their responsibility to the eternal God ! If it would not be encroaching too much on the subject of this evening, it might be profitable to pass over the whole connection of this beautiful yet awful allegory : and I will venture to present a short extension of it from the faithless shepherd to the perverse flock. He whose eyes are upon ministers, to watch the discharge of their duty, examines the character and principles of professors with a scrutiny no less severe ; and distinguishes between the precious and the vile with equal penetration and justice. “ And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the “ Lord God, Behold, I will judge between cattle “ and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats. “ Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have “ eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread “ down with your feet the residue of your pastures ? “ and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye “ must foul the residue with your feet ? And as “ for my flock, they eat that which ye have “ trodden with your feet ; and they drink that “ which ye have fouled with your feet. Therefore, “ thus saith the Lord God unto them, Behold-I, “ even I, will judge between the fat cattle and

“ between the lean cattle. Because ye have
“ thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed
“ all the diseased with your horns, till ye have
“ scattered them abroad; therefore will I save
“ my flock, and they shall no more be a prey;
“ and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And
“ I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he
“ shall feed them, even my servant David; he
“ shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.
“ And I the Lord will be their God, and my ser-
“ vant David a prince among them; I the Lord
“ have spoken it*.” The close of this allegory,
evidently referring to Jesus Christ, David sleeping
with his fathers, conducts us at once to the sub-
ject, and to the parable of this evening—

THE GOOD SHEPHERD:

for “ He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he
“ shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry
“ them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those
“ that are with young.” He shall adapt his su-
perintendence to the circumstances in which his
people shall be respectively placed,—encouraging
the fearful—strengthening the weak—consoling
the bereaved—instructing the ignorant—reclaim-
ing the wandering; while he makes the young the
peculiar objects of his care and tenderness. This

* Ezekiel xxxiv. 17—24.

is the character which he assumes to himself; and which he exhibits under the same image, in a parable not inferior to any which have preceded it. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

“ But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd,
“ whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf
“ coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth : and
“ the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.
“ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling,
“ and careth not for the sheep. I am the good
“ shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of
“ mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know
“ I the Father : and I lay down my life for the
“ sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not
“ of this fold : them also I must bring, and they
“ shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold,
“ and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father
“ love me, because I lay down my life that I might
“ take it again. No man taketh it from me, but
“ I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it
“ down, and I have power to take it again. This
“ commandment have I received of my Father*.”—

It cannot have escaped any attentive reader of this passage, that it is less a regular parable, than a combination of images to illustrate his own character, and the truths connected with himself and his church, which he wished to convey to different classes of his hearers. There is neither that unity nor continuity which distinguish his regular parables. There are frequent breaks in his address ; and in the resumption of the image, changes are

* John x. 1—18.

made, to meet the objections, or rouse the attention of those to whom he addressed himself. As his purpose varied—from himself to those who should arise in his name, or who had preceded him—he alternately represents himself as a shepherd, or as the door of the sheep-fold. Having premised these things, two duties lie before us;—the first, to present you with the parts of the images employed peculiar to Eastern countries, that we may better understand the subject;—the second, to lay before you a plain and concise exposition of the parable.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that although, in this parable, as well as in similar allegories, there are manifestly allusions to customs connected with a shepherd's life very different from our own, the writers who have professedly illustrated scripture by Eastern practices have treated very sparingly on the subject of pastoral habits, and slightly, if at all, noticed these peculiarities. The *sheep-fold* is evidently an inclosed and well-defended building. It is common in the East to keep their flocks in the open field, and to defend them by vigilance, rather than by buildings of any description. Thus angels announced the birth of our Lord to "shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night." This is the practice of the Arabs: but they assemble, for the preservation of their flocks, in great numbers, with many dogs, and keep up almost a constant shouting, to terrify the beasts of prey who are abroad

at the midnight hour. They also kindle large fires, partly for the same intent; but principally because, although the days are extremely hot, the nights in the East are so intensely cold, at certain seasons, that an exposed situation would be otherwise intolerable. It is also common for shepherds in that country to resort to holes in the rocks, caverns, and ruined buildings. Such an use is yet made of the Temple of Apollo in Asia Minor; and the fragments of desolated cities afford shelter to shepherds and their flocks: so that it is a figure employed in the scriptures to mark the complete destruction with which a state is threatened, that it shall not even be visited by the shepherd and his flock. It is evident, further, that flocks are, for the most part, at large, because they remove from place to place for pasturage, as their necessities require. It was thus that Joseph wandered long before he found his brethren, who had changed their resort, with the cattle committed to their charge. This ancient custom still continues in Palestine: the herds graze near inhabited places without molestation, and shift their pasturage at their convenience. This brings us nearer the point:—approaching human habitations, they are liable to other depredations besides those to be apprehended from beasts of prey, and must therefore take other measures to secure their property. Sir Isaac Newton has suggested, “that as the

“ words were spoken near the Temple, where sheep
“ were kept in folds, to be sold for sacrifices; Christ
“ here alludes to what was peculiar in those folds :
“ that as they were kept locked, they excluded not
“ only the thief, but the shepherd, until the door-
“ keeper opened them.” Dr. Doddridge objects to
this exposition ; and says, “ I cannot think, what-
“ ever occasion Christ might take, from the sight
“ of sheep, to represent his people under that
“ image, and himself as a shepherd, he would
“ describe them like sheep shut up in a pen to be
“ sold for sacrifice. Nor does the shepherd’s lead-
“ ing them out, with it’s attendant circumstances,
“ agree with this explanation. In countries where
“ there were so many savage beasts, it might be
“ ordinarily necessary to have the folds better
“ secured than among us : and the chief shepherd
“ might often leave a servant to watch them while
“ thus shut up, and come himself to lead them
“ out to pasture in the morning.” It should seem,
however, that the reference here is to the provision
made for the security of flocks in the vicinity of
cities, where they were sheltered within the outer
gate of the habitation : and those which apper-
tained to persons of rank, had, probably, separate
and well-defended buildings, for the express purpose
of guarding them both against beasts of prey and
robbers.

Another singularity is, such a discrimination of

individual animals, amidst large flocks, as to call them by *name*—a name, also, which they seemed to know and obey. To a casual eye, it appears no small acquisition, on the part of the shepherd, to form a perfect acquaintance with every sheep in the flock, so as instantly to distinguish it from another. This we know is effected: but to name them separately, appears an extension of ingenuity peculiar to the East.

The shepherd is represented as “*going before them,*” and the “*sheep follow him.*” This is reversing our own practice: but it is manifestly not only an Eastern custom, but common to antiquity. Sometimes they followed the call of the shepherd,—at others, to a well-known tune played upon his simple instrument. I am much mistaken if this latter method of assembling cattle is not yet practised in Italy; and vestiges of it are easily traced in the *Odyssey*, and in other ancient poetry, as well Roman as Grecian.

They know *the voice of the Shepherd*, and obey it. This is necessary in a mountainous country, where the toil of collecting them would be excessive, and perhaps the thing altogether impracticable. But he must have been little given to observation, who has travelled much in his own country, to whose mind an illustration of this passage is not present. In South Wales, I have seen, as the day closed, and the sun was about to set, a shepherd's boy advance

along the foot of a chain of mountains; and giving a signal, by a peculiar call or whistle, the flocks, which were scattered like spots of snow over those stupendous elevations, began to move together; and, collecting as they poured down the sides of the steep descent, advanced to him in order, without leaving one straggler behind. “And a stranger will they not follow, but flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.” How accurate an observer, and how faithful a delineator of nature, was our Lord! Judea was a mountainous country; and it was impossible to collect the sheep, but by the voice of the shepherd.

It is necessary now to decide the *sentiment* of the parable: and as the imagery varies, and has less of unity than is usually kept in our Lord's figurative discourses, so the scope of the allegory seems to extend to several points, the principle of which is, *The love of Christ to his Church*. In connection with this leading principle, we may observe the evidences which he produces of his own character and mission,—the exposure of the pretenders who preceded him,—the Scribes and Pharisees, who claimed to be pastors of the church of God,—and of the seducers who should arise after him;—the tenderness which he exercises over his people,—the test which he establishes of a faithful pastor, that he shall enter upon his office by Him alone,—the character of his genuine followers,—

and the universal extension of his dominion. These important considerations are all connected with the prominent sentiment of the parable; and having decided its principle, as well as explained its peculiar features, the exposition which it is necessary further to give may be concise, without any material omission. The images are so familiar,—that little is required in explanation;—and so beautiful, that nothing can be added to advantage.

From HIS lips, who never failed to employ language corresponding with the occasion, the awful introduction of these solemn sentiments is very impressive:—“*Verily, verily, I say unto you.*” Connecting this with the circumstances immediately preceding, it is most evident that he addressed himself to the Pharisees; and the occasion demonstrates that his purpose was equally to expose their pretensions as guides of the church, and to establish his own. Even before he advances his own authority, he charges them with an assault upon his church, not occasioned by their zeal, but by their avarice and ambition. “He that entereth not
“by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up
“some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” Before we advance to fix this charge upon the Pharisees, let us establish the point, that we are not spiritualizing, but explaining the parable; and that, in applying it to Jesus, to his church, and to interested, unfaithful pastors, we are unfolding

it's genuine meaning. Besides the evidence arising from the parable itself, the key to these allegories is already given by the prophet Ezekiel, when he says, "*Ye, the flock of my pasture, are men;—and I am your God, saith the Lord Jehovah.*" Connect his denunciation against those who enter not in by the door, with his declaration,—"*I am the door;*" and it will then be seen, not only against whom the charge originally was directed, but that it includes all who obtrude themselves upon this sacred office without his sanction; or who withhold the doctrines which he preached, and which he lived and died to establish. Nor is it merely said, such a worldly pastor is an unworthy or careless shepherd, but he is "a thief and a robber." He not only does no good;—he does much mischief to the church. He leads men astray by his precepts, and causes them to err by his example. He confirms them in their unbelief, and makes them "abhor the offering of the Lord." He robs, also, God of his glory, Jesus of his crown, the Spirit of his influences, the gospel of it's character, the christian of his hopes. By these signs shall he be known and detected;—when he omits or alters the system of salvation, as exhibited in the scriptures,—when he substitutes for the doctrines of truth, his own speculations,—when he betrays either enmity or negligence regarding the person or the work of Christ. Such unfaithful pastors, to whom indeed

Jesus denies the name, and upon whom he fixes one far more appropriate, may be discovered by their very induction into the sacred office. They entered not by the door ;—they were not sanctioned, qualified, or sent by him. Whatever acquisitions they have made, they are not partakers of his grace, nor under the guidance of his Spirit. They receive not the seal of his approbation in the produce of their ministry, as they honour not him in it's character. He exposes their motives, when, after detecting them as robbers, he subsequently describes them as *hirelings*. Self-interest induced them to undertake the charge ; and they have no gratification in the work. The hour of danger draws near, and they desert their station. False doctrines are circulated ;—and they are ignorant how to repel them ; or indifferent to their pernicious influence ; or themselves contribute to their dissemination. When no evil impends, the negligence with which they discharge their duty shews how little their heart is in it : and, as a servant hired to watch a flock in which he has no personal property, is regardless of it's prosperity, and looks only for his wages—since he has no risque in the danger, no benefit in the increase of the cattle,—so such teachers, careful only to secure their worldly aggrandizement, are indifferent to the spiritual interests of their cure. If these features were recognised as distinctly referring to the Pharisees, and to

impostors, when Jesus spake them, they are capable equally of application to unfaithful ministers in all ages of the church: and the test of pastoral character is given in few words:—"All that came before me, or, all who have entered in another manner except by me, however distinguished in rank, or applauded for talents, are thieves and robbers."

Such is his exposure of unworthy shepherds.—Now listen to his description of his *Church*. The sheep and the fold describe his people, individually or collectively. They are presented as sheep, when their personal qualities are intended;—as a flock gathered into the sheep-fold, when they are formed into an assembly to worship God, or a body to walk together according to the faith and order of his gospel, and to enjoy his ordinances. But as individuals, or as a church, they exhibit the same qualities, and the same character. They *hear*, and *know*, and *obey* the Saviour's voice, whether he speak to them himself, by his providence and word; or whether he make known his will by the ministry of others,—by those pastors whom he has sent, and those ordinances which he has established for their spiritual instruction. They *listen* with devout and solemn attention, to learn his will. They compare spiritual things with spiritual. They prove all things; and hold fast that which is good. They *distinguish*

between things that differ—they *know* his voice. And their obedience keeps pace with their knowledge; at least, it is their anxious wish, their earnest prayer, their constant effort, that it should do so; and their severest grief and mortification when they fall short of this standard. They *follow* him. They imitate his example, obey his precepts, exhibit his spirit, acquire his submission, and participate his purity. Genuine christianity is resemblance to Christ: and this is called *following* him; as communion with God is denominated *walking* with him. Nor must we exclude *suffering* for his sake, from following him: for this is no less a part of our duty; and circumstances may arise to enforce and claim it. Thus he unites these things, when he says, “If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

“And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of “strangers.” Under this simple and natural image, a temper of mind befitting the church is presented. They are bound to try the spirits, whether they be of God. “To the law, and to “the testimony: if a man speak not according “to these, it is because there is no light in him.” Nothing can chain down a genuine christian to attend a ministry from which Christ is excluded. No prejudice in favour of places and forms,

although he may have his preferences, will bind him to a place from which He who presides in the churches has removed the candlestick. He who hears the gospel aright, attends it; that "he may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ:"—it is the nutriment by which he lives. As he can distinguish between true and false doctrine, so will he cleave to the one, and reject the other. They know not the voice of strangers—recognise not the sermon which excludes their Master: they will not follow such a teacher—they will flee from such a ministry.

Finally; with what tenderness and truth he draws *his own character and conduct*, as the Good Shepherd! In what short and comprehensive terms, and under what beautiful imagery, he shews his care of his people, and the felicity and security which they derive from him! "By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." What can we possibly need for both worlds, which is not promised here? Security from present evils, and from final ruin—"he shall be saved." Liberty without danger—"he shall go in and out," under guardian care, and an unslumbering eye. All present and future wants supplied—all necessary good bestowed—all things ready provided—"he shall find pasture." All spiritual principles imparted, growing up to eternal felicity;—"I am come that

“they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” It is impossible not to have discovered, from the scope of the imagery produced in this Lecture, that the pastoral life, properly filled up, and in eastern countries, cannot be an indolent life;—vigilance, tenderness, anxiety, danger, are all blended. Jacob describes it feelingly and accurately,—for he served an hard master. “These twenty years have I been with thee: thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it: of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.” This is a true picture of an eastern shepherd—his perils, and his privations. The charge of numerous flocks in all situations—the danger from robbers—the exposure to wild beasts—the necessity of incessant vigilance and dauntless courage—the endurance of the alternate, almost insufferable, heat by day, and intense cold at night. Twice David adventured his life, in rescuing a lamb of his flock,—first from a lion, then from a bear: and these circumstances con-

* Gen. xxxi. 38—40.

firm and illustrate the nature and necessity of eastern sheep-folds. Who does not at once remember the watchings and tears of Jesus for the salvation of mankind? On the summit of the mountain, after days of labour, he devoted the night to prayer. There the morning-star, beaming upon Jerusalem, shed its mild and beautiful radiance upon a Saviour upon his knees, pleading for a ruined world. But he advanced further than this; he actually gave his life for his flock,—and this as a sacrifice. The time is not come, to defend and demonstrate these important facts;—this duty belongs to the department of Scripture Doctrines. At present, our plan requires only that we should shew you they are in the parables, in order to give a faithful exposition of these figurative expressions. Besides the affirmation that he laid “down his life for the sheep,” it is evidently the result of a covenant—“therefore the Father loveth me;” a “commandment received” from him—an accordance with his wisdom and his will—a voluntary act: “I lay down
“my life of myself: no man taketh it from me:
“I have power to lay it down, and I have power
“to take it again.”

There remains only one more thing to be noticed; and that is, *the unity, extent, and final bliss of his fold*. “Other sheep I have, which are not
“of this fold: them also I must bring, and they

“shall hear my voice; and there shall be one
 “fold, and one Shepherd!” This evidently alludes
 to the gathering of the Gentiles under the bene-
 volent system of the gospel, and in opposition to
 Jewish prejudices; thence, to the final and uni-
 versal extent of the empire of Jesus, over all
 nations, terminating in the harmony and bliss of
 heaven. What a benevolent heart was this! how
 unlike the narrow and contracted prejudices of
 sects and parties! What a state of final and eternal
 blessedness it discovers,—as the temple in which
 all the redeemed are finally to meet! Let it teach
 us charity by the way; and stimulate us to press
 towards that world where all hearts and all
 churches are one;—where there is one fold,
 and one Shepherd.”

carables, in order to give a full and complete
 these figurative expressions. Besides the affir-
 mation that he laid “down his life for the sheep,”
 it is evidently the result of a covenant—“there-
 fore the Father loveth me,” a “commandment
 received” from him—in accordance with his wis-
 dom and his will—a voluntary act. “I lay down
 “my life of myself: no man taketh it from me.”
 “I have power to lay it down: and I have power
 “to take it again.”

There remains only one more thing to be no-
 ticed; and that is, the unity, eternal and final bliss
 of his fold. “Other sheep I have, which are not
 of this fold: these also I must bring, and they

LECTURE XV.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

MATT. XX. 16.

So the last shall be first, and the first last.

THE salvation of man is represented throughout the scriptures as an object of infinite importance; and as occupying the attention of every being, himself excepted,—but by him it is regarded with indifference. God is employed in promoting it. The counsels of eternity embraced this grand design; and Jesus was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” in the earliest sacrifices, by a figure: and “who verily was fore-ordained “before the foundation of the world, but was “manifest in the last times for you, who by him “do believe in God that raised him up from the “dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and “hope might be in God.” Every revelation from God has referred to these purposes of mercy; and whether it was addressed to the eye by some significant type, or to the ear by prophetic eloquence, it expressed divine compassion, and

breathed "good-will to man." In every victim immolated upon every altar, a confession of the necessity of an atonement was made; and in those institutions of a sacrificial nature, which were prescribed by divine authority, an indisputable allusion to the death of Christ, as their consummation, existed. The obvious and irresistible conclusion was drawn by the apostle, after a long and luminous train of reasoning, founded upon the acknowledged rites of the former dispensation—"Without shedding of blood is no remission." In language corresponding with these types the prophets declared, "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed:"—or, soaring above human nature, and speaking in the paternal language of the Deity himself, they said, with infinite dignity and pathos, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help found." The complete developement of these benevolent designs appeared, "when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The compassionate intentions of the Deity were no more seen through types darkly and contractedly; but all the immeasurable extent of them, so far as they are comprehensible by us,

became most manifest in the person and work of Christ. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." But these gradual and repeated manifestations, especially this unparalleled and sublime close of them, sufficiently indicate the interest which he takes in human salvation.

His providence is perpetually carrying on the grand design which his compassion projected. Every day enlarges his kingdom; and shall continue to extend his spiritual dominion, until time shall close: then, eternity shall witness its consummation, and give space to an empire which the material universe cannot contain. In the mean while, He who sits above all thrones, subordinates time and providence—human and infernal agency—to his purposes. What we call chance, is "direction which we cannot see," or do not comprehend. The instrumentality purposely employed in his cause—or that which unconsciously promotes it—or that which is intended to oppose and subvert it—or that which is directed to some very remote object, as it should appear altogether unconnected with religion,—all these are under his controul, and rendered subservient to the interests of religion, and the final establishment of his empire among men. Thrones may be created, or

overturned—empires may be born or perish—heroes may conquer or be defeated,—out of these natural vicissitudes, and the collision of human politics, he works his will, and from this dark and fathomless chaos, commands a spiritual and eternal creation to arise. Thus has he in all ages connected the oppression of tyrants, the ambition of conquerors, the crooked policy of governments, the hatred and hostility of man, with his cause; and rendered these engines of human might, instruments of his will, and subservient to his gospel. Angels are engaged to promote these designs, which providence is thus working out: “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that are heirs of salvation?” We believe, because the scriptures teach us to believe, in infernal agency; and that fallen spirits are permitted to be active agents on the theatre of the material universe, and to infuse into the unguarded mind of man such suggestions as are best calculated to stimulate his slumbering passions, and excite his depraved nature. Why then should it be deemed incredible, that pure and holy spirits, who are represented as rejoicing in human salvation, should be permitted to engage in a work so suited to the benevolence of their character, as that of counteracting this evil influence, and stimulating whatever holy principle, whatever just conceptions, whatever consistent practice, the

christian possesses by the grant of the Holy Spirit? I will not yield the sublime notion, that the spiritual world surrounds me, while the eye of God is upon me; and that I dwell in the midst of heaven, while I sojourn on earth.

Demons are awake to all these transactions; and stand prepared, so far as their influence is concerned, either by force or by fraud, to circumvent and to counteract them. "Your adversary, "the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking "whom he may devour; whom resist, stedfast in "the faith." These evil spirits are represented as active as they are malignant; ever vigilant and wakeful; suffering no opportunities, of obstructing our progress, or seducing our passions; or interrupting our peace, to escape. Such constant scrutiny, and such unwearied labour, mark the estimation in which they hold the immortal mind, and the infinite value which they attach to it.

Man alone is an indifferent spectator of all that is passing around him; above him, beneath him, to secure or to destroy his most precious interests. Man alone, feels neither fear on the one hand, nor affection on the other. Man alone trifles, while every thing is serious; sleeps, while every thing is active; loiters, while every thing is pressing towards it's consummation; and sports on the brink of destruction, without end and without remedy.

Amidst those who have shewn an interest in human salvation, either to promote or to hinder it, who has been so conspicuous as Jesus Christ? His zeal and affection in this great cause were amply displayed in his ministry and life. We feel indignant when our appeals are rejected; when our persons are despised; when our tears are scorned; when our motives are misinterpreted, when our characters are defamed. But he turned not away his cheek from the smiters: he rendered blessing for cursing: he wept over the city in which his murderers dwelt, and at the trying moment when he was closing his unavailing, but painful and affectionate ministry among them. While he yet lived, he employed all possible means, and sought every opportunity of instruction. By the most accurate representations of the Divine character and rights; by the most persuasive entreaties; by the most awful considerations; by the most earnest and affectionate addresses, he wooed—he threatened—he promised—he wept—he prayed: yet man remained unmoved—unmoved at scenes which inanimate nature felt, and at sufferings under which the creation bowed,—the mysterious circumstances which closed his ministry, and accompanied his crucifixion.

We have witnessed all the ardent feelings connected with his ministry, in his matchless parables:

and it is evident, that these were founded frequently, as well upon the particular characters to whom he addressed himself, as upon general principles. This circumstance will be most manifest in the parable this evening claiming your attention; as well as in another, which, from its corresponding import, shall precede it. Both employ corresponding imagery;—both respect the Jews in their prejudices, and the extension of their privileges to the Gentiles. The first is the parable of the two sons.

THE TWO SONS.*

A certain man had two sons: and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe

“him.” Here, assuredly, we have an exemplification of the text,—“The last shall be first, and the first last.” The unpromising, disappointed his father’s fears: the promising, deceived his hopes. The former is unquestionably the most estimable character.

In looking to the *occasion* of this parable, we may easily determine its application. The most revered and illustrious of the Jewish nation,—their religious teachers and their elders, upon whose venerable head time had shed his wintry snows—opposed the Saviour. These were likely to have weight, especially upon the multitude, who judge from the appearance. But apart from the multitude, religion seemed to give authority to the one, and reason to the other. Who that saw the holy servant of the temple, graced with the priestly robe, and ministering at the altar of the God of love, would suspect malice, envy, hatred, injustice, uncharitableness, to lurk beneath pretensions so imposing, and an office so sacred? As for the elders, nature had set her seal upon them: their pulses should beat with regularity; and the hand of time having extinguished the passions, it might be presumed that the flame of reason would burn steadily, and in its purity, on the altar of their hearts. “I said, days should speak, and the multitude of years teach wisdom.” —“Great men are not,” however, “always wise.”

And these were alike deficient in sense, justice, and candour. Unable to impugn the teaching of Jesus, they demanded the authority on which he proceeded; and this not to satisfy themselves as to his credentials, but to entrap him in his answer. He evades, for the moment, the demand, by proposing an inquiry in his turn, as to the ministry of John. "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* In thus parrying their obvious attack, there is neither art nor cowardice. He was neither afraid of their enmity, nor solicitous

to shrink from their scrutiny: but while he asserted his own right of teaching, independently of their pleasure, he was desirous to turn their attention upon themselves. He resisted undue domination; but he considered even this assumption an opportunity of speaking to their consciences. The parable instantly follows, and the occasion decides the *sentiment*:—it is, that *high religious pretensions are frequently unsupported by corresponding obedience.* They were the plausible characters who made long prayers, fasted often, strictly observed the letter of the law, and even exceeded it, in the multitude of their ceremonial rites founded upon tradition: yet all was hollow and faithless: the form of sound words had no devotion,—the observances no spirituality; and they rejected those whom God had appointed to teach them a more excellent way, and to expose their errors. They were too proud to learn—too hardened to repent. But publicans and harlots, notorious offenders, listened, and were influenced; they were pricked to the heart; and proved by their practice the renovation of their principles. The condition of these was most sinful and unpromising: yet the profane listened when the plausible derided;—sinners embraced that gospel which pharisees rejected. This is evidently the sentiment of the parable, from its *application*: “Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and

“ the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” No sanction is here given to vice ; but important facts are stated, and common occurrences brought into notice. There is more hope of rousing a notorious sinner, than of awakening to a sense of his danger a self-satisfied and self-sufficient professor. The parable was therefore intended to extend beyond the persons to whom it was immediately addressed, and to apply as a general principle in all ages. Those who promise most fairly in religion, often disappoint our expectations, and those respecting whom we entertained but little hope, reward our anxieties by an unexpected conformity to the will of God, and a conduct as exemplary as their conversion was unforeseen and surprising.

Behold, then, the eternal God coming forth in the character of a *Father*, to plead with the creatures of his power. He is a sovereign, and might command : but he is also a parent ; and condescends to entreat us to “ that which is convenient.” He prescribes *activity*, while he “ speaketh unto us as unto children.” There is a work to be performed for God, and for ourselves. His cause and interest are to be promoted. He leaves these, not uncertain as to their issue, — for under all circumstances he secures them ; but subject to human instrumentality, that we may have an opportunity of serving ourselves while we glorify him. “ Son,

go work to-day in my vineyard." He says it to all;—all are under the obligation of consecrating their time, and property, and talents, to God. No rank is so elevated as to be exempt from this duty: no station is so mean as to render obedience unacceptable. ¶ He is no respecter of persons; but in "every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." ¶ He prescribes the time as well as the work; "it is to-day." we have no time to lose; that which ought to be done, ought also to be done quickly. ¶ He that will reap, must seize the seed-time. ¶ Besides the uncertainty of life, every season has its duties, its labours, its possibilities;—these neglected, can never be recalled. ¶ We may repent lost time; to a certain extent we may redeem it: but we can never recover it. ¶ While this urgent message is delivered to all, it is differently received. Some refuse the injunction, and set the Father and the Sovereign at defiance. Infidelity dares to do it in language; and either denies the existence of God, as the most effectual way of escaping his authority; or sets it at defiance; and says, "Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him?" and what profit should we have, if "we pray unto him?" ¶ Thousands who do not presume to dispute his commands, neglect and disobey them. ¶ The sensualist, the profane, the worldly, admit his claims without difficulty in theory, and disregard them in practice. ¶ Yet so bold is their

rebellion, and so notorious, their violation of every sacred precept, that the admission of allegiance in their profession is the result of habit and education, not of reflection; while the answer of their lives to the injunctions of heaven is,—“I will not.” Yet these are not out of the reach of mercy. What were the publicans and harlots, to whom Jesus pointed, but practical violators of the commands of God, and this openly and undaunted? And such have we seen arrested in their mad career, by some awful providence, or some pathetic appeal.

Consideration like an angel came.

They reflected—they repented—they obeyed. Their subsequent and prompt obedience demonstrated the sincerity of their contrition. Let us never despair—nor cease to labour for the salvation of the most abandoned.

But others assent;—yet disobey. They hear the gospel, and approve it; but it does not influence them. They promise much, and produce nothing. Every sabbath hears them repeat their vows; every week-day witnesses their violation. The morning of life, like that of Solomon, is sometimes fair, and its advance overcast,—the sun goes down in darkness. Those whom we should have pronounced sincere professors, and likely to become eminent christians, often cause us to blush for their instability, and to weep over their ruin. Some seem to harden as they hear the gospel; and always pro-

missing obedience, death surprises them, loitering to the last judgment. This is an awful and interesting subject, which might furnish occasion to delineate many characters as fair and as false in the church of Christ. If our attention were not called off to the parable of the labourers in the vineyard.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.
 “And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.
 “And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last

"unto the first. And when they came that were
 "hired about the eleventh hour, they received
 "every man a penny. But when the first came,
 "they supposed that they should have received
 "more; and they likewise received every man a
 "penny. And when they had received it, they
 "murmured against the good man of the house,
 "saying, These last have wrought but one hour,
 "and thou hast made them equal unto us, which
 "have borne the burden and heat of the day.
 "But he answered one of them, and said, Friend,
 "I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with
 "me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy
 "way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.
 "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine
 "own? Is thine evil because I am good? So the
 "last shall be first, and the first last: for many
 "be called, but few chosen."

The scope of this parable is, *the compassion of
 God, in calling men to the knowledge of himself, and
 employing them in his service; and his sovereignty
 in the distribution of his present privileges and
 final rewards.* The image is that of an house-
 holder providing labourers for his vineyard, send-
 ing them to work at different divisions of the day,
 extending his compassion even to the last hour, and
 rewarding the last even as the first. It resembles
 the former parable; as it represents religion as a
 work, and adverts to it's important duties. It may
 furnish an elucidation of the different periods of

human life, in ~~whole~~ different characters are brought to the knowledge of the truth: it discovers them all shewing forth their faith by their obedience: they are all labourers, ~~but it points out~~ the limitation of human exertion—the evening is fast approaching! it suggests our responsibility—we must give an account of the employment of our time: it presents, finally, an equitable and even liberal recompence, given, however, not as a reward of merit, but as an act of grace;—not because of our labours, or in proportion to them, but distributed by the Divine Sovereignty. This seems to be the leading sentiment; and it is not unlike that of the former parable, viz. that *the most unpromising frequently prove the most illustrious; and that those who have entered his church, under whatever circumstances, shall have equal acceptance, privileges, and reward.*—“So the last shall be first, and the first last.” It is but an amplification of the former parable, by an extension of the illustration, and the choice of another image. The parable of the Two Sons discovered that the most unpromising not unfrequently outstrip the professors, and carried the sentiment to the length, that the fairest pretensions often subside into absolute disobedience. This parable paints the recompence of the just; and shews that God is no man’s debtor: that what he gives, he promised at first unconditionally; and

that he will not be fettered by human opinions. To understand this the better, it is necessary to advert to the OBJECT which our Lord seems to have had especially in view, when he delivered this parable. It was to obviate the objections of the Jews against the Gentiles, who were to be admitted to equal privileges with themselves. Those objections were easily foreseen: and here they are ably repelled, by an appeal to the sovereignty of God. The Jews had indeed been long admitted into his church—had borne the heat and burden of the day—had sustained the yoke of Moses, and the pressure of ceremonial observances; yet had promised more than they performed, and proved unprofitable labourers at last. These services were, however, amply rewarded; and God failed in respect of nothing which he had promised them. At different periods of time they had received the invitation, and often heard it in vain. Under different dispensations, God has called men to repentance; from the beginning of the creation to this hour:—the patriarchs, the law, the prophets, and the apostles, have all gone forth, to bring the spirit home to God. The Jews were called early: the Gentiles at a period far more remote, even the eleventh hour, under the last dispensation, have been invited, and press into this holy service. They shall have equal privileges here with believing Jews, and shall inherit the

same heaven. This gave offence to the whole Jewish nation: "they murmured against the good man of the house." Nothing proved a greater stumbling-block in the way of their receiving the gospel, than this generous extension of it to all nations. The apostles themselves slowly resigned these prejudices; which were so deeply rooted in the heart of Peter, that an express vision, to the purport of this parable, was necessary to induce him to visit Cornelius.

The meaning of the parable thus ascertained, the circumstances of it are obvious and natural: and we discover that it has nothing to do with the doctrine of degrees in glory, or the measure of future bliss to be enjoyed by different individuals. It is enough that each happy spirit in that world shall be *filled* with all the fulness of God; shall enjoy as much as he can contain. And he must be a stranger to himself who does not feel himself unworthy the lowest degree of that felicity; the grant of which, in measure, excludes envy and repining—nay, even desire; for

"The meanest place at God's right hand

"Is infinite delight."

Although there are several peculiarities in this parable, arising out of eastern customs; these are so obvious, as to render it unnecessary at large to

detail them. The usual wages of a day's labour was manifestly the *denarius*, or Roman penny, amounting to sevenpence halfpenny of our money. This was the stipend of the labourer; also, among the Romans; and that it should be so among the Jews in the days of our Lord, probably arose from the circumstance, that, being tributary to the Romans, they adopted in these things the customs of their conquerors. The market-place was the regular station for those who were destitute of employment to occupy, that they might be hired. The stipulation with the early labourers was express as to wages, the last having but an hour of labour, were to confide in the generosity of the Master:—"Whatever is reasonable, I will give thee;" to disquiet not now. The circumstances explained, and the original intention of the parable settled, it is time to APPLY it to ourselves in various interesting particulars: for it is obviously capable of extending far beyond the Jewish nation and their prejudices; and forms an admirable illustration of the compassion and sovereignty of God, in the salvation of men. Applying it to the natural condition of men, observe; He first sent out the others close their ears. He said: *Where they are found*:—"in the market-place," the place of public resort. It will apply to various scenes and stations in which mankind are occupied and discovered. It will apply to the

gay assemblies where the fashionable are found, not merely of all the day, but all the night; "riders" into the public haunts of dissipation and of vice; to the theatres of vanity and of folly. It will apply to the mart of merchandise, where men meet to promote and to secure their temporal interests; or to the stages where they follow their ordinary occupations. Around the first of these stations, pleasure has drawn her magic circle, and seems to forbid religion even to approach: within its privileged line, the turbulence of riot, the sound of the viol, the burst of noisy, senseless levity, alone are heard; and from it the voice of heavenly wisdom, the pleadings of infinite mercy, are excluded. Yet the grace of God can storm even this rampart of dissipation, and gather thence servants for his cause. The great, the noble, the illustrious, and the gay, have been called. As to the sphere of business, although not very open, it is not always inaccessible. It has its days of rest; and there is a possibility that the man of trade may enter the sanctuary in which the fashionable would blush to be found: he may, therefore, learn the truths, against which the others close their ears. He is assailed also in every direction, and must sometimes listen; for "wisdom lifteth up her voice in the streets, and crieth at the entry of the city, and at the going in of the doors." Religion follows him,

with her representations, througho all the walks of life. But it seems to be applicable most distinctly to public congregations, assembled for the purpose of availing themselves of the means of grace: because it is evident that the labourers in question put themselves *in the way* of being hired, the market place having been already spoken of as the proper place of resort for those who had no occupation; and thither householders wanting labourers repaired to seek them, and to select such as they deemed most suitable for them. It is also evident that more were there than were hired; for at every hour he found some still unemployed. And our Lord himself improves the parable, by saying, as upon another occasion, "Many are called, but few chosen." Thus, among the variety who even constantly attend public religious instruction, even candour must allow that there are some who have neither part nor lot in this matter.

2. *(The situation in which they were found, and "standing idle.")* But we represented these very persons eager in the pursuit of their pleasures and of their business, and even diligent in their attendance upon the means of religious improvement. Of all servants, the slaves of the world are the most laborious. The representation is correct, both on our part, and on the part of the parable. A man may do all these, and yet deserve to be called "idle," because he lives to none of the noble purposes of life.

he labours after none of it's high and future interests; he has done nothing towards the great end for which he was sent into the world;—and which was, to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever. The pleasure-taker must be allowed to be idle: for God has pronounced, *Isa. 60*, that *liveth in pleasure is dead*, even while he liveth. And how far the man of business obeys the injunction, *Mat. 6*, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, we leave you to determine. Neither is it enough to be found under the means of grace. *Simon Magus* was so found; yet was he in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Nor is it enough to hear the word, and be affected by it. *Felix* so listened. When *Paul* reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, *Felix* trembled, and answered, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*. Nor is it enough to perceive, and to desire that which is good. *Balaam* so desired;—“*Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his*.” A man may have all these, and yet deserve the character of idle, if he proceed no further than approval, and desire, and intention; for “*the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing*!” Something more is necessary. The mind can never be alive, until it is quickened. Christian activity depends upon Divine agency; and for this reason, a state of nature is described under the images of sloth—sleep—death!

Applying this parable to the compassion of God, we may remark that they *attracted his notice*. The misery of their condition excited his pity: their poverty called forth the riches of his liberality. They were found of HIM whom they sought not, and gratified by unexpected employment. He *sought their advantage*:—and here is all the character of Divine goodness delineated. He did it *early*. Thus he said of the diligence with which he urged the welfare of his rebellious people, “I sent my prophets rising up early, and sending!”—it is a term which implies earnestness: and this feature is prominent in all the scheme of redemption. He did it *repeatedly*,—neither repelled, nor wearied, nor discouraged. O the long suffering of God! what repeated addresses have we heard, and heard in vain! what returning sabbaths—what earnest entreaties—what renewed privileges—what matchless forbearance!

He extended his mercy even to *the last hour*.—A most affecting situation is here supposed,—a man “at the eleventh hour,” in the evening of life, on the brink of eternity without hope, without Christ, without pardon! The feeble hand raised against heaven, the heavy ear shut against the thunder of judgement, the failing eye closed against the beauty of holiness, the languid heart beating defiance, the aged sinner glorying in the character of a hoary traitor against the majesty, the throne, and the rights of God! Such is the situation:

and it is the more deplorable, inasmuch as age has rendered it more desperate. Habits of vice have become inveterate and incurable; the yoke of corruption, the chains of sin, have been strengthened and rivetted by time. The powers of nature are weakened. Not merely is the will more indisposed, by long converse with evil, to choose the good, and the conscience is become seared as with a hot iron; but the man is less able to labour for God, if he were most willing; and were his heart tender and affectionate, his hands have lost their activity. All appears to be lost!—but with God all things are possible. He who is able of the very stones to raise up children to Abraham; He who caused, in the valley of vision, a vast and living army to spring up from the dry bones; and gave them breath from the four winds of heaven; He who formed man, from the beginning, out of the dust of the ground; He who raised those that were even in their graves during his pilgrimage; he who saved the dying thief—can quicken the dead in trespasses and sins, even in the most advanced period of life, and in the very article of death.

He expostulated with those whom he invited.

His exhortation was forcible and affectionate:

“Whestand ye here all the day, idle?”—Where

“fore kick ye at my ordinances?” Their answer

furnishes us with an argument against those who

presume upon late salvation, and put off the great

concern. Before they expect the lenity shewn to those men, let them ask themselves if they are placed in the same situation? Can they say with truth, "Because no man hath hired us?"—because we never heard of thy name?—we never read thy laws?—we were never favoured with thy free and large invitation?—the word of life was never held out to us? Ah, no! This is indeed a plea for the poor heathen, but not for the professor! "Why," then, "stand ye here all the day idle?"—"Turn ye, turn ye! why will ye die?" It does not appear that those hired at the eleventh hour were present at the first, the third, the sixth, and the ninth, and rejected his call. *no* God may save such; but he has given no absolute promise that he *will*. In the exercise of the riches of his liberality, these were sent to labour—placed in a sphere of active duty: they consulted not with flesh and blood, but immediately obeyed the heavenly calling. *and* Here was the evidence of their genuine conversion. They received an equitable and an ample recompence,—and it is sure to all who engage in his service: for "faithful is He who hath promised, who also will do it."

LECTURE XVI.

How much owest thou unto my Lord?
THese words belong, indeed, to another subject; but adopted as an inquiry relative to the discussion of this evening—they are in themselves a Lecture. They instantly turn our attention upon the intellectual powers, with which we are endowed—the means of religious improvement which have been afforded—the times which have gone over us—the fragment of life which remains—the responsibility which must follow.

Our hopes and fears
 “Start up alarm’d, and o’er life’s narrow verge
 “Look down—on what?—a fathomless abyss—
 “A dread eternity!—How surely our’s!”

It is but too true, that poets, and moralists, and preachers, have reasoned and written upon these infinite, but neglected, interests in vain. To listen, to assent, is all which they have gained; while to rouse, and to improve, was that at which

they aimed. Christian benevolence weeps over its disappointments, amidst the applauses which follow it;—weeps, that no more is effected than to win the judgment, when it hoped to secure the heart;—weeps, because it sowed not for the barren harvest which it reaps: it sought not the praise of man, but the approbation of God, and the salvation of the immortal spirit. Yet this very temper which it deplores, proves the point which it is desirous to establish. It founds its powerful appeals upon the dangers to which the individual addressed is exposed, and the ruin which he incurs. His reluctance to act upon these appeals demonstrates the secret, unacknowledged consciousness of his state. He who concludes that his affairs are not in order as to worldly business, fears to examine his books, and to learn how embarrassed they really are. He who is conscious that he is in prosperous circumstances, delights to raise his hopes into certainty, by the inspection of his concerns; and to ascertain how much he has gained, in any given period of time, from year to year. So he that is at peace with God and with himself, loves to trace the evidences of his assurance: while he who is justly doubtful of his state, rather chooses to shelter himself in uncertainty, than, by a faithful examination, to learn the fallacy of his hopes, and the extent of his misery. Such persons are with difficulty roused to

reflection, and cast "hopeless thought" from them with all possible expedition. Hence the disappointments which ministerial fidelity experiences; and the transient character of those impressions which the solemn representations of the sanctuary make upon the minds of most professors of religion. Aware of their spiritual bankruptcy, they fear to audit their accounts; and shrink from the necessary and important, but to them appalling inquiry, "How much owest thou my Lord?"

In the bosom of the real christian, this inquiry awakens the most pleasing sensations. The debt of gratitude increases as it is discharged; and both the payment and the accumulation are delightful. "Still paying, still to owe" is to him no hardship, but an unspeakable enjoyment. It is the character of heaven; where the homage of emancipated spirits is the tribute of gratitude, and constitutes at once the service and the felicity of the place. The debt is infinite; and the acknowledgment is unceasing and eternal. Propose then the inquiry to the holy spirit, pressing "toward the mark for the prize of this high calling." Ask him, "How much owest thou my Lord?" and he will cheerfully confess,—his time, his talents, his property, his eternal hopes. He will confess this with his lips, and demonstrate it in his life—in the cheerfulness, integrity, and constancy, with which

he devotes his days, his powers, and his possessions, to the service of religion. And conscious how short he falls of his obligations, he will ask a respite from the question until he reaches heaven; and *there* he will shew forth his sense of it's infinite extent.

The sentiment evidently contained in the text, while it expresses our obligation, and thus bears upon the principal subject, also supposes our demerit, and illustrates another parable preparatory to our immediate object. That such services as can be performed by feeble creatures like ourselves should be accepted, is an instance of the infinite condescension and compassion of God; but that these should be deemed meritorious, and include an obligation on his part to us, is an imagination which could originate only in the grossest ignorance, combined with the most insolent presumption. Yet such a conclusion is not unfrequently drawn; and to guard against the spirit which it discovers, our Lord spake the following parable*.

“ But which of you, having a servant plowing,
“ or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by,
“ when he is come from the field, Go and sit down
“ to meat? And will not rather say unto him,
“ Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thy-
“ self, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken;

* Luke xvii. 7.—10.

“and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth
 “he thank that servant because he did the things
 “that were commanded him? I trow not. So
 “likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those
 “things which are commanded you, say, We are
 “unprofitable servants; we have done that which
 “was our duty to do.”

The servant here supposed, is not an hireling, engaged for the particular purpose of tending the cattle, or labouring in the field; but a domestic *slave*, taken in war, or purchased by his lord's money, therefore entirely at his disposal; employed in whatever business the family might require: and receiving his preservation and maintenance from the hand of his master, was bound to him, alike by the law of the land, and the ties of gratitude, as long as he lived. It is evident that such a servant's labour was simply his duty, and could not be deemed meritorious. How admirably does such a statement exhibit the nature and extent of our obligations to Him, to whom we owe “life, and breath, and all things;” and the character of such services as we can render him in return!

The order supposed is perfectly consistent with the present state of society;—that he should first make provision for his lord, and attend upon his table; and afterwards himself partake of his master's liberality; and “eat of his bread,” and “drink of his cup,” with thankfulness. The beauty and

stability of society depend upon the order and observance of social relations. Every man has his place assigned by providence; to which corresponding duties and talents are annexed; and no man is happy when removed from his natural orbit, or his social sphere. Revolutions have produced not only the most awful convulsions, but the most calamitous results: like some horrible earthquakes they have unseated the great, and displaced the mean; the higher and the lower classes have each exchanged situations; and neither have been useful or easy in their new station, because it has been unsuited to both in their education and habits. The powerful must not oppress—the poor ought not to assume: when each discharge the duties of their respective stations—the affluent becoming the benefactors and protectors of the needy, the servant cheerfully applying himself to the labours and obligations of his rank in life—the harmony of society is promoted, and the interests of all parties are secured. It will be observed, in all the parables of our divine Saviour, and in *all* his discourses, whether public or private, figurative or didactic, that he preserves inviolably the relations of society, and insists upon their corresponding duties. His apostles follow his steps:—and christianity, while it sheds its benign influence upon every station, however elevated, however humble, to sanctify, sustain, and console it, prescribes to each, its

limits, it's spirit, it's services. A lesson is read alike to the monarch and to the subject, to the parent and to the child, to the husband and to the wife, to the master and to the servant. Neither is allowed to usurp the place of another; nor are they suffered to forget their reciprocal obligations. The preservation, the morals, the comfort, the improvement of society, are constantly kept in view; and the welfare of the whole is sought and secured by the arrangement of the parts of which it is composed.

The command that the servant should *gird* "himself," refers to the long garments worn in the East; which required to be laid aside, or drawn up and bound closely round the body, when they were journeying, labouring, or waiting upon tables—in every work, in short, demanding strength or agility. Girded loins became, therefore, the image of readiness, for service or for travelling. The Israelites were to eat the passover in haste, with their loins girded, and their staves in their hands; waiting for the signal to depart, and prepared to obey it at a moment's warning. Jesus commands, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning," ready to receive your Lord; in the posture of active service, and with the preparation, which he has prescribed, actually made. The reference is to a marriage-feast, to which the bridegroom came, with his bride, by torch-light. It was necessary that the lamps of the house should

be prepared for his reception, and the torches of the servants whose duty it was to meet him; and that they should be girded also in readiness instantly to serve his table. This Oriental custom will be more fully explained hereafter; but the allusions to it are frequent, both in the Old and New Testament.

The *sentiment* is of infinite importance;—it is expressed by the Saviour himself. “So likewise ye, “when ye shall have done all those things which “are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable “servants; we have done that which was our “duty to do.”—How few can say even this! How far we fall short of it! But granting all that can be conceded to human performances, the sentiment is, *that the best of men can advance no claim of merit upon God, or in respect of salvation, on account of their most righteous and perfect services.* Even apostles are guarded against so presumptuous a plea:—yes, apostles; one of whom said, “If any “man think he hath whereof to boast in the flesh— “I more.” Can we pretend to a merit which he renounced, and which his brethren did not dare to advance? The system of meritorious works, set up by the Roman Church as availing for ourselves and for others, for the living and for the dead—and the boasting of the Pharisee, whose self-righteous spirit relies on his imperfect obedience for acceptance and salvation—fall at once under this sentence

from the lips of Jesus ;—and pride and boasting are for ever excluded.

Having guarded against the delusion of merit, we may now safely discuss christian duty :—and this leads us to the consideration of our present subject—

THE TALENTS,

occupying *two* parables, which we must endeavour to compare and combine. The first is contained in the nineteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, from the twelfth verse to the twenty-seventh, both inclusive.

“ He said therefore, A certain nobleman went
“ into a far country to receive for himself a king-
“ dom, and to return. And he called his ten ser-
“ vants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said
“ unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens
“ hated him, and sent a message after him, saying,
“ We will not have this man to reign over us,
“ And it came to pass, that when he was returned,
“ having received the kingdom, then he com-
“ manded these servants to be called unto him, to
“ whom he had given the money, that he might
“ know how much every man had gained by trading.
“ Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound
“ hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him,
“ Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been
“ faithful in a very little, have thou authority over
“ ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord,

" thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he
 " said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.
 " And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here
 " is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a
 " napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an
 " austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not
 " down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And
 " he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will
 " I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knew-
 " est that I was an austere man, taking up that
 " I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:
 " Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into
 " the bank, that at my coming I might have
 " required mine own with usury? And he said unto
 " them that stood by, Take from him the pound,
 " and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And
 " they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)
 " For I say unto you, That unto everyone which hath
 " shall be given; and from him that hath not, even
 " that he hath shall be taken away from him. But
 " those mine enemies which would not that I should
 " reign over them, bring hither, and slay them
 " before me."

The second parable bearing upon this subject is
 recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's
 Gospel, from the fourteenth to the thirtieth verse.

" For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travel-
 " ing into a far country, who called his own
 " servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

“ And unto one he gave five talents, to another two,
“ and to another one; to every man according to
“ his several ability; and straightway took his
“ journey. Then he that had received the five
“ talents went and traded with the same, and made
“ them other five talents. And likewise he that
“ had received two, he also gained other two.
“ But he that had received one went and digged in
“ the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a
“ long time the lord of those servants cometh, and
“ reckoneth with them. And so he that had received
“ five talents came and brought other five talents,
“ saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five
“ talents; behold, I have gained besides them five
“ talents more. His lord said unto him, Well
“ done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast
“ been faithful over a few things, I will make thee
“ ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy
“ of thy lord. He also that had received two
“ talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst
“ unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two
“ other talents besides them. His lord said unto
“ him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou
“ hast been faithful over a few things, I will make
“ thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the
“ joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the
“ one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that
“ thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast
“ not sown, and gathering where thou hast not

“strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy
 “talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is
 “thine. His lord answered and said unto him,
 “Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest
 “that I reap where I sowed not, and gather
 “where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest there-
 “fore to have put my money to the exchangers,
 “and then at my coming I should have received
 “mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent
 “from him, and give it unto him which hath ten
 “talents. For unto every one that hath shall be
 “given, and he shall have abundance: but from him
 “that hath not shall be taken away even that which
 “he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into
 “outer darkness: there shall be weeping and
 “gnashing of teeth.”

The circumstances of these parables vary in
 certain particulars, and the imagery is somewhat
 diversified: but the leading features are, for the
 most part, the same, as is the *sentiment* precisely:—
it is, That to every man a trust is consigned, for which
he is responsible; and that the judgment passed
upon him finally will correspond with the means of im-
provement at present confided to him. The occasion
 on which the first parable was spoken, is said to
 have been two-fold: “Because he was nigh unto
 “Jerusalem; and because they thought that the
 “kingdom of God should immediately appear.”
 Upon these two points the principal parts of the

parable evidently bear. The last was to rectify a mistake:—they imagined that Jesus was immediately to take to himself his great power and reign. To check this premature sentiment, he represents himself as “a nobleman,” or prince, “going into a far country to receive a kingdom, and to return.” Much time must elapse before his empire could be established; and in the meanwhile he allots his subjects duties, and expects their obedience. The former reason seems intended to point a censure. “He was nigh unto Jerusalem;”—Jerusalem, which had slain his prophets, refused his ministry, and which sought to seize his person:—Jerusalem is arraigned and condemned, when he speaks of the rebellion of those who “sent a message after him, “saying, We will not have this man to reign over us;” and when he pronounced the awful sentence of their impending ruin,—“But those mine enemies, “which would not that I should reign over them, “bring hither, and slay them before me.”

There are *circumstances* stated in this parable which appear to have a strong allusion to events then passing; and which may serve to throw considerable light upon the structure of our Lord's parables. That he was an accurate observer of nature, and that he faithfully delineated it's beautiful features, we have frequently had occasion to remark: but the book of nature is not the only volume of instruction. He suffered no event to

pass unnoticed: from the falling of the tower in Siloam, to the martyrdom of those whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, he rendered the course of providence subservient to religious information. Upon national and local occurrences several of his parables appear to me to be constructed: some of these already have passed before us;—and if it be admitted that the very shape of these allegories was moulded upon events passing before the eyes of those who understood them not, how great must have been their blindness, and how fearfully did they accomplish the prediction respecting them, that “seeing they should not perceive, and hearing they should not understand”! Let us look a little back, for illustrations of this position, which nearly concerns the parable before us. At the close of the eleventh chapter of St. Luke’s Gospel, we are informed that “the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.” With these hypocrites, the Herodians, or courtiers of Herod, were usually in league. Accordingly, at the commencement of the succeeding chapter, Jesus cautions his disciples against the deceit, which he emphatically calls the *leaven*, of the Pharisees: and, as it appears to me, in manifest allusion to the spie employed by that tyrant, he takes occasion to

guard them against secret offences ; shewing them that they were amenable to an higher tribunal, and that the eyes of the Searcher of hearts were upon them ;—" for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed ; neither hid, that shall not be known." How much beauty, as well as force, is there in the parables and precepts of our Lord, when the circumstances out of which they arose are ascertained ! He goes on to encourage them to meet with undaunted courage the persecutions to which they should be exposed. The recent death of John the Baptist, by the hand of the Tetrarch, would give weight to his exhortation. The " rich worldling" probably pointed particularly to this prince ; all whose treasures and palaces availed him nothing, as he was " not rich towards God."

The necessity of calculating upon the issue of a war before it is provoked, which instructed his disciples to count the cost before they embraced christianity, referred probably to a war in which Herod Antipas at that time engaged against his first wife's father, Aretas, and in which he was defeated. Herod had put away the daughter of Aretas the Arabian, for the purpose of marrying his sister-in-law, Herodias ;—and our Lord's parable contained strictures on his conduct, severely just. These, made on different occasions, seem to have provoked him to a degree that induced

him to send the Pharisees to advise him to abscond; being afraid to put him to death, because of the people. "Certain of the Pharisees came unto him, saying, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee."

In the parable of the Unjust Steward, there is probably an allusion to Archelaus, and his accusations before Cesar, from whom the kings of Judea held their crowns. These things are merely glanced at, to shew the use which, I apprehend, our Lord made of passing events, as well as of surrounding scenery and national customs, to illustrate religious truth.

In the parable under review, of a prince "going into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom," there is a palpable reference to well-known facts. Herod went to Rome, to receive the kingdom from Augustus, a short time before the birth of the Saviour. The rewards to his officers, on his return, according to their fidelity and services, are pointed out in the succeeding verses; and the severities against the partisans of his rival, Antigonus, at its close. Dr. Doddridge indeed says, "It is quite needless to pretend that this is an historical narration, that Archelaus is the nobleman referred to." The circumstances, we have already suggested, agree better with Herod, than with his son. Assuredly it would be a constraint put upon the import of the parable

to confine it to such an interpretation, and folly to represent it as an historical narration; but it is of importance to ascertain facts which might furnish occasion to these instructions; and which probably did so; since particular circumstances may often happily illustrate general principles.

Respecting the *money* spoken of in these parables, there is a vast difference between them. However they agree in their leading features, they have a sufficient dissimilarity to prove them to be two distinct parables, spoken on different occasions, for different purposes,—but elucidating and establishing the same principle. The process of examination is the same; but the sums are different, and the rewards different also. Our translators have set the sum in the first parable at *ten pounds*. The *mina* contained *sixty shekels*: the common calculation of a shekel, at *half a crown* of our money, gives but *seven pounds ten shillings*. Dr. Prideaux fixes the shekel at *three shillings*; on which estimate the *mina* gives *nine pounds sterling*. Dr. Doddridge has justly remarked, that “our Lord probably chose to mention this *small* sum, to illustrate the munificence of the master in bestowing on the faithful servant so great and noble a reward,” as authority over ten cities. Here also the same sum, a pound, is awarded each; while with one it produced ten-fold, with another five; but in the second parable each servant has

a different sum: and *all*, with the exception of the unprofitable servant, exactly double the original grant. "In the second parable, also, the grant is very considerable. If the talents were talents of gold, he that had five of them was entrusted with a sum of 36,000*l.* sterling; if they were of silver, they amounted to 2,250*l.* What an intimation of the value of our powers and privileges! There are circumstances, however, which may lead us to doubt the accuracy of our calculations upon ancient sums; at least, the Greek word*, has been used for a sum considerably less than the talent, to which we attach so much value.

Dr. Doddridge has excellently remarked, that in the second parable, "where the servants are represented as *doubling* the *different sums* entrusted to each, the *reward* is spoken of as the *same*;" to each it is said, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" but in this first, "the *sums* entrusted being *the same*, and the *improvement* described as *different*, there is a proportionable *difference* in the *reward*: which, as it is a beautiful circumstance, was no doubt intended for our instruction."

While the sentiment of both parables is the same, the *occasion* of the last differs from that of the first. Besides censuring the rebellion of the Jews, it was

* *Talanton*, used by Homer for something of much less value than the price of two fat oxen. — *Iliad* vi. ver. 750, 751.

manifestly the scope of the first to rectify the mistake of some of the disciples, that the kingdom of God "should immediately appear." The design of the second, to guard against an opposite extreme: and lest the placing this object at a distance should encourage their negligence, our Lord connects their responsibility with the uncertainty of the hour when the account shall be required: "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of Man cometh!"—and while this is the improvement of the parable of the Virgins, it is the introduction to that of the Talents.

Having explained the occasion, the circumstances, the singularities, and the sentiment of these parables, as elucidating *one* important principle, three things only remain to us;—To shew what is peculiar to the first parable; To point out what is common to both; and, To suggest a personal improvement of the subject.

1. In regard to the first parable, we find a *government*. The other speaks only of a man, not in extraordinary circumstances, although respectable. This is a nobleman—a prince—"going to receive a kingdom." How admirably does this apply to our Divine Master! who is indeed gone to take possession of his heavenly inheritance, and who will return to receive the homage of the whole creation. In the mean while, as the subjects of his dominion,

we can have no difficulty in ascertaining the nature and extent of our allegiance; as he has left us, in the volume of inspiration, the code of his righteous laws, and the charter of our eternal privileges.

The trust committed to us varies according to our situation and rank in life. To some it bears a public character: they are the ministers of his crown, and deputed to govern in his name, conformably to his prescriptions, and consistently with the rights of his subjects. To these he says, "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." It is a delegated authority, of which we must render an account when it is resigned; and receive from him either approbation and reward, or indignation and punishment. Some, from their rank in life, have an extensive influence, even if they do not fill a public station: and according to their influence is their responsibility. Every man has a trust to keep, and duties to discharge. To every man are confided relations of life to be cherished and occupied; or if he be so isolated, as to have no one dependent upon him, no one to sympathize with him, no one to look up to him for support, for instruction, for affection,—if he be such an outcast from society, or such a stranger in it,—he has still his own heart to keep, his own concerns to secure, his own salvation to work out, his own talents to improve;—to him even it is said,—"Occupy till I come!"

The rebellion is but too intelligible. It appears in the open scorn with which his precepts are sometimes treated,—when the sceptic denies his right to govern, and the sensualist avows his hatred of his person and laws: and while the opposition is sometimes more secret, the principle of hostility is not less real or irreconcilable. The sending a message after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us," is the transmission of an embassy to the superior court from whom the prince held his crown, to dispute his right to the throne, or to desire emancipation from his government, according to the customs alluded to, and the facts already detailed. Archelaus was really so arraigned at the court of Augustus Cesar. The sullen and censorious spirit, who abused his Lord's kindness by hiding his talent, and, in return, had the temerity to attack his character, as an excuse for his own indolence—in effect, accuses God of requiring more service than we are able to perform, or have grace to supply. His argument is admitted. Thou knewest that I was an austere man:—not to grant the fact—this, as Dr. Guyse observes, is "a most unrighteous thought of God:—but to expose his guilt and folly upon his own principles, 'Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee, thou wicked servant.' The punishment corresponds with the image;—it was rebellion against a lawful sovereign: and

the penalty is such as was due to treason—death: “Slay them before me?” Those also who had abused his goodness, are, by the second parable, consigned to prisons, such as were attached to fortresses and palaces; and tormented according to the usages of the East, in connection with the exercise of despotic regal power, when it was resisted or disobeyed.

Having seen what was peculiar to the first parable, it is now necessary to compare and combine them, shewing what is common to both. In both parables, *talents* are committed to our trust. They are of different orders, including all the grants of providence and grace. They are given with a liberality honourable to God, and proportionate to our wants and comforts. They are various in their character, and afford the same diversity in their application. They include life and breath, and all things; all are held from God—all are intended for the most useful and valuable purposes—all ought to be consecrated to his service and glory—all must be accounted for at his tribunal—all will be weighed in the development of our character, and in fixing our eternal destiny.

In both cases, *improvement* is expected, and *abuses* exist. The expectation is reasonable; but, alas! how seldom is it realized. The pursuits of mankind are but little proportionate to their

duties, and still less to their responsibility. They live, as though they were to live here for ever; and employ their privileges and possessions, as though they were their own property, and not held in their character of stewards for another.

In both cases, a *scrutiny* is supposed. The account which is required is as reasonable as the expectation of improvement;—and too much is not demanded. God does not “reap where he has not sown, and gather where he has not scattered;”—it is a vile and ungrateful calumny. He seeks only his own, and with that addition which it was intended to acquire, and capable of producing the improvement expected, contributing as much to the happiness of the individual, as to the Divine glory. It is, however, a scrutiny severely just. “Be not deceived: God is not mocked.” We trifle now with impunity, but nothing escapes the eye of justice; and in the last judgment, we can neither avoid the investigation, nor escape the decision.

In both cases, a *sentence* is passed, in the majesty of its character, as well as the justice of its principles, according with the truth and dignity of God;—a sentence rendered necessary to vindicate the Divine honour, and establish the Divine veracity;—a sentence which shall distinguish this moral government, and command the acquiescence of the assembled universe, and the

plaudits of heaven. But, on that is our sentence, which shall plunge the guilty into irretrievable and eternal ruin. Cast ye the unprofitable servants into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

3. Thus are these parables proved to be substantially the same, not merely in sentiment, but in their modes of illustration: it remains only that we should apply to ourselves these general and important principles. The talents committed to our charge consist of time, capacity, property, and privileges of a religious character. For all these we must account; and He who gave them demands that they should be improved. That these differ in their distribution among men, becomes an additional motive for each to examine his personal responsibility.

Time is a talent committed to our trust. It is the pivot upon which eternity, with all its infinity of joy and of woe, turns. It is a treasure, which in the hand of a fool is squandered, but which a wise man holds as the chief good. It is something present in fact, although never so in idea. We are always looking back, to act over again the past; or forward, to draw upon the future to supply the deficiencies of the present. But the present is all that we can justly call time, as to any useful purpose. Over the past we have no controul. Tears cannot blot out its vices, or countervail

its indolence. Lost to it, just lost for ever! On the future we have no claim. Presumption may attempt to realize it; but it is not our own. It is a fairy prospect, and the world is the magician that conjures it up to Hope:—but Death touches it with his cold hand, and it vanishes. We thought we were rich in years, and we are reduced to the last mite. The veil is rent from our eyes, and eternity is before us. Time is, in itself, important, to the cultivation of our minds, to the security of our interests, to the charities of human life. But it is most important, as it links the present with eternity. It is this that communicates infinity to the finite. Hell depends upon it;—heaven depends upon it. If these considerations are not sufficient to rouse the attention, supported as they are by the testimony of the conscience, then, indeed, human feeling “sleeps the sleep of death!”

This talent is either neglected or wasted. Negligence seems not to satisfy human guilt; and the most ingenious methods are devised to throw this treasure away. The frivolous amusements of fashionable life, or the total inanity of indolence; the man who yawns away the day without a pursuit or a perception; and those who live only for the card-table, the assembly, and the theatre, are too contemptible to be noticed. These pursuits are despised by genuine greatness of mind,

as unworthy its powers—are renounced by the man of business, as incompatible with his interests—are spurned by the christian, as derogatory to his honour, and destructive to his enjoyments. They are left, then, to the dissipated, the vain, and the foolish; who, if they have a reward, find it in the vacant laugh, or the insipid society of minds as weak as their own. We dismiss this waste of time without further comment: condemned by reason, it scarcely needs the additional sentence of revelation. If the man who practises cannot seriously defend it, we leave the matter to God and his conscience; and turn our attention to those who, so far from pleading guilty, are challenging a reward. These are the industrious: with them are no wasted days—no unfilled hours: they husband even moments; and have learned to calculate time justly. If the present were all. They look round upon a patrimony increased, and a family flourishing: they have the plaudits of the world, “for men will praise thee, if thou doest well unto thyself;”—and they demand those of religion. They would receive them, if religion could separate the present from the future,—if it did not regard time as dependent upon eternity, and, in its legitimate employment, conducive to its interests. But, in this union, it is evident *that* time is wasted, however employed to earthly advantage, which is not

consecrated to the purposes of religion, and preparation for heaven. And the presumption upon the whole compass of human life, which is indeed sufficiently short, when death is seen arresting all ages, and when it is apparent that long life, desired by all, is attained by comparatively few, adorns human guilt and folly. He lives long, who lives well, however early he may die; and the man who has wasted human life is an infant at fourscore.

Intellectual capacity ranks high among our talents. Time is given to every man: but not to every man high mental endowments. Some minds, like the swallow, always sweep the ground; others, like the eagle, soar beyond the sphere of mortal vision: quickened, as by elementary fire, the eagle rises towards the source of light, and really inspired by spirituality, the mind of man seeks its Creator through all the ranges of his works; and finally, guided by religion, settles on his throne. In some we scarcely discern a capacity equal to the ordinary demands of life: in others, a knowledge so profound, that we fail to fathom it, so extensive in comparison with its known resources, and so rapid in its developement, that we almost judge it intuitive. The worth of every thing must be estimated by its application to the purposes of human life, in connection with its immortal tendencies. And so calculated what

splendid talents frequently become eclipsed ! Of what avail is it that the man is a metaphysician, if his reasoning powers trifle with objects less than themselves, as confined to the present, or directed to the future, are skillful only to obscure and to mislead ? Elevating his reason to a god, he burns incense before the altar of his own idol : his pride of intellect blinds his judgment. He will not believe even God himself, although he shall afford him a thousand incontrovertible evidences that he has spoken, unless he will also condescend to explain distinctly the point which surpasses his knowledge, and this is not always consistent with the plans of the Deity, nor indeed possible to a finite being, whose incapacity to grasp the Infinite evinces its own limitation, but can detract nothing from the object which escapes it. Nor is this a danger confined to the individual ;—society suffers also. How many have deceived themselves, and afterwards ruined others, by misapplied talents. The destroyer goes forth, to seduce by his sophistry, and to deprave by his example. The precept is loose, and falls upon a willing ear ;—the example acts the precept, and the senses overpower a judgment already seduced. Triumph, then, O man of intellect, in thy spoils ! The young are overtaken with premature death—the grey hairs of the mother are brought with sorrow to the grave—beauty is blighted and perishes—society is outraged—thy

mental vigour resembles the hurricane, displaying its strength only in the desolations which it scatters over nature. These are thy victories! But if humanity plead with thee in vain, listen to the voice of God,—“For all these things thou shalt be brought into judgment.”

Property is a part of the talents committed to us, of the least significance as to its intrinsic value, but not of the least importance as to its application. The distribution of property is evidently disproportionate, but we have yet to prove that this is inconsistent with paternal wisdom or tenderness. The contrary obtains, alike from scripture and from observation. There is some good to counterbalance this imagined evil—some end to be answered by this lamented privation. It becomes less a matter of regret, that we reap sparingly of the present, when we consider our proportionate responsibility. Let us take it on the wide scale;—for, while the responsibility of all is sufficiently great, “where much is given, much shall be required.” A more miserable and more contemptible wretch cannot breathe than a rich man cursed with a heart that cannot feel. But when we remember his final audit, we lose our indignation in pity.

But what shall I say of your *religious privileges*? These are as numerous as the other distributions of God—and adapted to our necessities;—they are not granted to every nation—nor to every part of

this, in their fulness. Their intentions are, to honour God; which is the end of every grant—time, talents, substance; to regulate all that precedes, and to secure our present and eternal welfare. The negligence with which they are treated, is marked not only by the defiance of the sceptic and the indifference of the professor, but by secret omissions of duty, by formality in public, and by the ingratitude of forgetting their source. Their improvement is to be traced in christian diligence, faith, and humility; and while they conduce to present purity and comfort, they lead to glory.

Regard then your individual responsibility,—and remember your privileges. Awaken to a sense of your duties and obligations ~~now~~.

Be wise to day—'tis madness to defer.

Next day the fatal precedent will plead:

“So on—till wisdom is push’d out of life.”

LECTURE XVII

THE HUSBANDMEN

MATT. XXI. 43

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

THE parable of which these words are an application is repeated no less than three times in the gospels; each of the evangelists, with the exception of St. John, recording it, with scarcely any variation of phraseology, and none of sentiment. That it should not be noticed by "the beloved disciple" is perfectly consistent with the obvious design of his history; which, being published many years after those of the other evangelists, is intended to supply those points of doctrine, precepts, or facts, which they had omitted to relate. That they should have urged it respectively, marks the importance of its subject, and the value which they attached to it. If we connect with it a figure employed on a former occasion, relative to the ministry of John the Baptist, and to the effect produced by it

as preparatory to the empire of the Messiah, and carry forward the parable to its close, in which it becomes united to another allegory,—we shall learn three momentous truths, which will occupy our whole attention on the present occasion.

First, The zeal and energy excited by the preaching of the gospel in the world. This will introduce the subject.

Secondly, The obstinacy and rebellion of the Jews, amidst their superior advantages: This will explain the parable of the Husbandmen.

Thirdly, The guilt and danger, in every age, of rejecting the Saviour, and resisting a cause which cannot fail to triumph. This will appear in the application which our Lord himself makes of the principal parable, under the new image which he introduces for that purpose.

First, The zeal and energy excited by the preaching of the gospel in the world, is elucidated by that singularly beautiful and figurative language of our Lord. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. This is the commencement of that dispensation, which the Jewish nation crowned their rebellion by rejecting, after having persecuted all the heralds who had announced it through so many successive

ages. It will therefore, with great propriety, introduce the principal parable; while it will explain one of the leading expressions in it's application, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." "The kingdom of heaven" is a phrase applicable to our Saviour's dominion in it's three great stages,—upon earth—in the heart—in eternity.

It will apply to the *kingdom of the gospel*:—and this is the immediate design of the passage: Jesus came to reign in the earth by his word and ordinances. John was the precursor, crying before his face, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high-way for our God;" according to the Eastern practice, from time immemorial, of preceding the monarch by heralds and pioneers. The substance of his proclamation was this:—"He came preaching, and saying, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' The kingdom of the Messiah was then commencing, with all it's privileges on the one hand; and all it's penalties on the other. It's privileges—a clearer display of Divine majesty—a plainer instruction in the most important truths—a more extended manifestation of the love of God to guilty man. It's operation was, discrimination—to discover and distinguish characters: "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this

world to bless penalties increased in proportion to its privileges; and of what must it demand of them who obeying the gospel of God? The term *kingdom of heaven* will apply to the influence of *Divine grace in the heart*. To this Holy principle the apostle refers, when he says, *The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power; not in profession, but in practice.* And again, *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* It does not consist in observances, however strict and decent, but in a holy and tranquillizing influence, and an experimental enjoyment of the privileges of Religion. There can be no doubt on this point, when Jesus himself distinguishes it from speculation and profession. And says, *The kingdom of God cometh not by observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or Lo, there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you.* The term is also commonly used to designate a *kingdom of future and eternal glory*. Thus it is admonished: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father.”* These were already in possession of the privileges of the gospel. Thus it is promised: *“They shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God;”* those patriarchs

having long before entered the world of spirits. This is implied in the eulogy pronounced on John the Baptist. And, as they departed, Jesus began to speak unto the multitudes concerning John, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out to see? a prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." This serious inquiry after their motives should induce us to examine our own, when we assemble ourselves in the sanctuary. "He who is attracted by merely human excellence, goes to see a reed shaken with the wind." Many a promising minister of the gospel has apostatized from his high calling, or wavered in his faith or practice, and all must yield to the influence of time, affecting their persons, enfeebling their talents, and finally closing their labors. John is not to be numbered with the triflers who sit down with Apollonius and Isidore, and Jacob

I I

sometimes attract public notice; nor the inconstant, who, enjoying all transient popularity, afterwards desert their principles: but he was shaken by persecution, and early cut off from the land of the living. Nor could they expect a man of splendid appearance and fashionable habits, in the wilderness: these hovered about kings' palaces, the glittering insects of a summer's day,—but avoided austerity and solitude. It was to be presumed that real worth attracted them; and He who could not be deceived, approved their attachment, and pronounced him “more than a prophet.” But when acknowledging, “Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist,” he adds, “Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he;” we must conclude, that he intends not so much the more extensive privileges and larger grants which the meanest christian, under the full gospel dispensation, shall enjoy, as the perfection of that state into which the emancipated spirit enters; where, in the full expansion of all it's powers, and in the plenitude of it's enjoyments, it possesses a superiority over the most illustrious characters, in the present state of being. Thus the dying thief prayed, “Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.” Thus shall Jesus say, at the final judgment, to “them” “on his right hand,—Come, ye blessed of my Father,

"inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?" Thus, "according to this promise," we expect "an abundant entrance to be ministered unto us, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour!"—It were easy to multiply passages, to prove that heaven is often implied by this term; but it is also needless. These distinct bearings of the phrase were necessary to be explained, because in each of these senses the expression "kingdom of heaven" is frequently employed; and to each of them, perhaps, it might be fairly applied in this very passage, if we carry its remark to the full extent of which it is capable.

The *violence* which it is represented as suffering, is a striking and impressive figure, the beauty and import of which is easily comprehended! It is, literally, the kingdom of heaven is *stormed*; in allusion to the forceful entrance of an army into a city, when it is carried by assault. The assailants are called the *violent*; a term which applied primarily to those who, not having a natural right, were invaders,—to those who, not being "children of the kingdom," came "from the east and from the west," from the north and from the south,—to "publicans and harlots," who, urged by their necessity, made a speedy and impetuous entry, before the "Scribes and the Pharisees,"—to Gentiles, who joyfully rushed forward, while the Jews stood

deliberating and indecisive, until their doubts rose into unbelief, and they not only refused to enter themselves, but strove to "hinder" others. This representation is confirmed by the declaration of our Lord, that, "the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Nor must we confine these words to this, their original bearing; they naturally and indisputably will apply to all those in every age, who are earnest and importunate respecting their salvation, in opposition to those who are indifferent. They not merely hear, but feel; not only feel, but obey; not simply obey, but strive; for which reason they are said, to use "force"—a constant restraint over themselves, and a holy importunity with God. They have sins to oppose; lusts to subdue; passions to conquer; battles to fight; dangers to encounter; difficulties to surmount; enemies to overcome. By every thing that indicates activity, and demands energy, their life is figured;—it is a race, and it is a conflict. They must strive and wrestle, and suffer. They must drink of their master's cup, and be baptized with his baptism. They must bear his yoke, and carry his cross. They must deny themselves; but in no case, and at no hazard, deny him. Their self-mortification is shadowed by the most cruel of all deaths, crucifixion. They are to be "crucified to the world;" to "crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts;" to "crucify the old man,

with his deeds,—another image of our natural depravity. All this implies energy and force; constant, painful, unsparring restraint over themselves. A holy violence with God is also implied,—a sacred importunity, that is not satisfied with asking the blessing, but seeks it diligently; waits for it, repeats its request; and never ceases to reiterate its complaints, and renew its treaties, until the object is gained. Such will be the feelings, and such the conduct, of every man in earnest for heaven: his resolution will be to perish in its pursuit, and at the throne of mercy, if he must perish;—and this resolution is the pledge of his victory. For this is not “unlawful or forbidden force”: it is permitted—it is approved—it is encouraged—it is required. The kingdom suffereth violence: God permits it thus to suffer; rejoices that it should so suffer; and stimulates others, by these examples, to use the same holy violence. These are more noble than the heartless and the supine. These are justified; but they are condemned. The period of the assault is dated, as to its commencement, from the days of John the Baptist. Not but that it had been assailed long before. Abraham was one of those assailants; when he pleaded for Sodom. Jacob, when he wrestled with the angel; and said, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;” and

when "as a prince he had power with God, and prevailed:" Moses, when he interceded so often, and so successfully, for Israel: Daniel, when he three times a-day besieged the throne of grace for himself and his people. Ah! these holy men teach us how we ought to feel, and to strive, and to supplicate: but we are slow to understand, and still slower to imitate. But in the days of John, this fervent desire, this holy impetuosity, burned with the greatest "violence." He attracted multitudes, and his preaching roused them: they flocked to his baptism, and crowded to flee from the wrath impending: so that the living tide, the irresistible torrent, swept with it even the Scribes and Pharisees. Thus the hearts of men were prepared for the preaching of our Lord. Then the assault was carried on by individuals and by companies. The Syrophenician woman, whose faith exceeded that which was found in Israel, and who returned from repulse with renewed vigour to the attack, took "the kingdom" by "force." The three thousand who were pricked in their heart, and cried, "What shall we do?" may be said thus to have stormed the city: Upon what a numerous army of successful besiegers do we of the nineteenth century look back! Ye martyrs, who shed your blood in the glorious conflict! ye took heaven by storm, and carried the kingdom by violence. O shame to

our indolence, that we linger by the way, and murmur at our inconsiderable difficulties! O shame to our cowardice, that we shrink from every appearance of danger and persecution, and tremble at reproach, even while our persons are shielded from injury! O shame to our apathy, that we have lost the spirit, the zeal, the energy, the patience, the hope, the faith, the joy, of these illustrious characters! But all is not lost: the kingdom of heaven yet suffers violence,—suffers it “until now.” Some vigorous spirits remain, undaunted, and earnestly striving for the prize. And thus shall it continue to be assailed, until “the end come,” and we shall *all* have complete possession:—we shall overcome “through the blood of the Lamb.” For the *success* of the assailants is distinctly admitted. They obtain possession;—they “take it;”—God yields the point. He promises thus to be vanquished. “Ask, and ye shall receive: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”—“The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” It is a possession that shall be for ever secured to them. That which is gained by violence, is usually also obtained by injustice, and seldom proves permanent. But this possession, although violently seized, is not unjustly obtained: God sanctions the act, and gives the invaders, a title to the empire. And none can

dispossess those to whom he gives a right of entrance. The admission into the present spiritual kingdom is a pledge of the triumphant entrance into the future eternal one. And there no enemies will remain. The conflict will be ended, the struggle finished, the victory complete.

From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. This is a struggle, glorious without injustice, violent without sin, ardent without oppression;—great, but not destructive. Such heroes must you become, to win this throne: for without such an assault on your part, for you there can be no heaven.

Having shewn the zeal and energy excited by the preaching of the gospel, as explaining the figure of violence employed by Jesus in reference to the effects of the ministry of John the Baptist; and carried the image through all the import of the term, the kingdom of heaven, even to the final glorification of the saints, we proceed to point out, as a singular and affecting contrast,

Secondly, *The obstinacy and rebellion of the Jews*, amidst their superior advantages;—which constitutes the sentiment of the parable of

THE HUSBANDMEN

Matthew 21. 33—44. There was a certain householder, which

Matt. xxi. 33—44.

"planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about,
 "and digged a wine press in it, and built a tower,
 "and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a
 "far country: And when the time of the fruit
 "drew near, he sent his servants to the husband-
 "men, that they might receive the fruits of it.
 "And the husbandmen took his servants, and
 "beat one, and killed another, and stoned
 "another. Again, he sent other servants, more
 "than the first, and they did unto them like-
 "wise. But last of all he sent unto them his
 "son, saying, They will reverence my son. But
 "when the husbandmen saw the son, they said
 "among themselves, This is the heir; come, let
 "us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.
 "And they caught him, and cast him out of the
 "vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord there-
 "fore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do
 "unto those husbandmen? They say unto him,
 "He will miserably destroy those wicked men,
 "and will let out his vineyard unto other hus-
 "bandmen, which shall render him the fruits in
 "their seasons."

Secondly, The circumstances of this parable, as recorded
 by the other evangelists, vary so little, that it is
 evidently the same parable recorded by each of
 them: and this narrative of it by St. Matthew is
 amply sufficient to elucidate the principle of
 reproof so strongly and pathetically urged upon

those guilty rebels, who were then plotting the death of Christ, which they accomplished in three days afterwards;—without detailing the language of the other evangelists; to whom, in the discussion, an occasional reference may be made, should they afford any amplification of this beautiful allegory.

The vine was diligently cultivated in Palestine.

Vineyards, therefore, were the common elucidation of husbandry in the scriptures, and employed as figures of prosperity and abundance.

When the plenty of Judah was the subject of prophetic benediction, it was thus expressed :

“Binding his foal unto the vine, and his asses’

“colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of

“grapes.” This image, combined with those of honey and butter, milk, oil, and wheat, described the felicity of Israel in their best times :—“He

“made him ride on the high places of the earth,

“that he might eat the increase of the fields;

“and he made him to suck honey out of the

“rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of

“kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and

“rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with

“the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst

“drink of the pure blood of the grape.” When

the description we have already given, in a former

Lecture, of eastern luxuries is considered, these

expressions will be found to convey to the inha-

bitant of that country a finished picture of magnificence and prosperity. The description of a time of profound tranquillity, like that of the reign of Solomon, borrows the same image: “Judah
 “and Israel dwelt safely; every man under his vine
 “and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-
 “sheba*.” The promise of a wide and lasting peace is couched in the same terms by the prophet Micah: and it refers to the universal reign of the Messiah, and the security it shall establish:—“He
 “shall judge among many people, and rebuke
 “strong nations afar off; and they shall beat
 “their swords into plough-shares, and their spears
 “into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a
 “sword against nation, neither shall they learn
 “war any more. But they shall sit every man
 “under his vine, and under his fig-tree; and none
 “shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the
 “Lord of Hosts hath spoken it†.” The vintage
 was a season of feasting and great rejoicings
 therefore it was threatened by Isaiah‡, “Gladness
 “is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field;
 “and in the vineyards there shall be no singing,
 “neither shall there be shouting: the treaders
 “shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have
 “made their vintage shouting to cease.” The
 rejoicing of a Briton when he gathers home his
 harvest, may convey to him the delight of the

* 1 Kings iv. 25. † Micah iv. 3, 4. ‡ Is. xvi. 10.

ancient inhabitant of Palestine at his vintage. These passages explain to us the features, habits, and manners of the country; and at the same time discover why the vineyard and the fig-tree are so frequently preferred, when the image, by which religious truth is intended to be illustrated, is husbandry. In those days, and in those days,

As to the *wine-press*, it was the usual and necessary appendage to the vineyard; as we gather from every passage in which the vineyard is mentioned. It was *walled*, to keep it from beasts of prey;—had a *tower*, that it might be watched and preserved from depredation; and was furnished with a *wine-press*, that on the spot the juice of the grapes might be extracted. St. Matthew uses the word which signifies a wine-press: St. Mark, that which implies the receptacle under it, into which the juice was expressed. Both of these were necessary to make the instrument complete. The one was the machine for pressing the grapes; the other, a vessel into which the wine ran from the press. Here it intends a cavity, a kind of subterraneous cistern, in which the liquor was received, and in which it was kept, until it was put into jars or pitchers of earth or wood, or the more ancient bottle of leather or skins. No human being

A similar image has been before noticed, but with this difference: that in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, the plantation was retained by the proprietor himself: here it is *farmed*—“let out to husbandmen,” at a certain rent; which rent was to be paid from the produce of the vineyard. In those days, and in that country, cattle was allotted for wages; dues were paid in kind; the income of individuals of superior rank, and even the royal revenue, were paid in necessities for subsistence: so that what we have perhaps conceived presents, judging from our own habits, have been, in the east, taxes of the state, or legal tribute to the landholder. The Gentoo laws prescribe the proportion in which cattle is to be given as the wages of the shepherd: and it is evident, in the structure of this parable, that a portion of the fruit of the vineyard was the stipulated rent which the husbandmen who farmed it were to pay to the proprietor.

Some circumstances are supposed, on account of the *facts* which they were designed to illustrate, improbable, if not impossible, in general life. No human being would have had the patience to wait so long, the forbearance to endure so much, the perseverance to send so frequently, or the compassion to forgive, to such an extent, injuries of a character so desperate. No human being would have sent servants in companies or singly,

and in succession, after some had been maimed, and others murdered—and all refused. Nor, under such circumstances, could it be imagined that any father would have sent his son, an *only* son, on the presumption that they who destroyed his servants might respect his child. Yet these apparently extravagant circumstances were necessary to a parable which should represent the conduct of Deity, whose “ways are not as our ways,” nor are “his thoughts as our thoughts,”—whose mercy is infinite,—and who did actually thus send a succession of faithful ministers, most of whom were martyred, and all of whom were rejected, and closed and crowned the scheme of his benevolence by sending his son. These improbable circumstances were essential to events as extraordinary; and which Jesus intended to shadow out by them. Other circumstances are again *ornamental*—introduced merely to preserve the beauty, unity, and probability of the parable; as when it is said, “Perhaps they will reverence my son.” It was probable that a father who could make up his mind to send his child on such an errand, would do it on such a presumption: but it is certain that the Deity foreknew what treatment Christ would meet with,—that it had been the subject of the clearest predictions, multiplied from age to age, gathering strength from time, and advancing in plainness as his advent approached:

it is evident that the design of his coming into the world was to suffer; and that this was the result of a covenant between the Father and the Son.

Already the principal part of the imagery employed in this parable has been unfolded in that of the Barren Fig-tree. The vineyard has there been shewn to be the Church,—it's separation from the world being intended by the enclosing walls,—it's privileges appearing in the protection and superintendence bestowed upon it. The proprietor was said to be God; and the expectation of fruit proved to be reasonable, as a return for his care and goodness. This is ground, therefore, which we need not re-tread. The inconsiderable alteration, that it is a vineyard let to husbandmen, for which they are to pay a rent gathered from the fruits which it bears, only implies, that from those who enjoy the privileges of religion, corresponding returns of gratitude in their lives, and graces in their character, are expected. A reference was then also made to the prophecies of Isaiah, applying the same image to the Jewish church, which was to be laid waste because of it's unfruitfulness; but here the vineyard applies to the universal church, to religion in general, which shall not be destroyed for the sins of professors; but those only who abuse or neglect their privileges shall be punished.

The import of the other parts of the parable is too obvious to require exposition; and the

application to the Jewish nation, in their general conduct, their existing spirit, and their approaching deprivation of the privileges which they had despised, is incontestable. Observe how closely the description afforded in the parable of the treatment of the servants, accords with the history of their own country, their public records, relative to their conduct towards the prophets*:—"More-
" over, all the chief of the priests, and the people,
" transgressed very much, after all the abominations
" of the heathen, and polluted the house of the
" Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And
" the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his
" messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; be-
" cause he had compassion on his people, and on
" his dwelling-place: But they mocked the messen-
" gers of God, and despised his words, and misused
" his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose
" against his people, till there was no remedy."—
This is a record of facts. Does the parable aggravate these things? or in the smallest particular depart from the authentic history of the country? How precisely does the description of their cruelties to the Son prefigure those sufferings which he was about to endure from their hands! or rather, how far short it falls, as all description must fall, of the monstrous and aggravated guilt of his

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14—16.

murders. At that moment the iniquitous purpose was in their hearts; and he knew that they were about to fill up the measure of their guilt in his crucifixion: he knew that his hour was come; he was not taken by surprise; and he was moved with pity, not with indignation.

How solemnly he foretold the extinction of their national existence; and the removal of their religious privileges;—and with this loss, this irreparable loss, their connected slaughter, to which they were about to be delivered over, in the dreadful destruction of Jerusalem, and the subsequent dispersion and miseries which should come upon them:—He rendered the sentence more terrible, by condemning them out of their own mouth.

“When the Lord, therefore, shall the vineyard boomath, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men; and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their season.” Another Evangelist represents this sentence as falling from the lips of Jesus himself; and that they, confessors to whom it must apply, were so moved and affected, that they said, “God forbid!” It is probable, however, that they, not perceiving against whom he spake the parable, themselves pronounced the sentence; and that he confirmed it, as in the text; after which, feeling the weight

and justice of the decision, they deprecated it's execution. To them, however, it applied; and from them their long-preserved privileges were taken, and the gospel preached unto the Gentiles, who gladly received it; while those to whom the word of this salvation was first sent, have rejected it to this hour. This is the application of our Lord himself; and this leads me to the last truth which I proposed to advance:

Thirdly, *The guilt and danger, in every age, of rejecting the Saviour, and resisting a cause which cannot fail to triumph.* We cannot mistake in the use which we make of this parable; when he himself thus improves it in terms which, while they were peculiarly suited to their conduct and situation, are not confined to any times, or to any people*. “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never “read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of “the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is “marvellous in our eyes?” It is said by St. Luke, “He beheld them,” when he said this; and that he said it after they had deprecated the sentence passed upon the husbandmen. What a look it must have been!—By an easy transition to another image, called forth by the figure employed in the scripture which he brought to their recollection,

* Matt. xxi. 42—45.

he confirmed the sentence, applied it to themselves, and extended the awful character of their guilt and ruin: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief-priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."

The universal application of which the sentiment is capable, renders it our duty to put a more general construction upon this awful passage, for our individual improvement. *The image* is familiar, and variously employed. Prophecy had adopted it: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." And when St. Peter quoted this prediction, and applied it to the Saviour, he exceeded the natural image, and mingled with it a spiritual property; for he called it "a living stone." He also adverted to the very treatment to which the Redeemer should be subjected; and to which he himself alludes in this parable, under the same figure, when he added, that he shall be "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence:"—and in so doing, he echoed the language of Isaiah. He is called a tried stone;

because, to every purpose to which he has been applied, he was selected and approved by Infinite Wisdom. It is remarkable that the same image is employed, in reference to the same person, not merely variously, but even in senses opposite to each other. Thus he appears a foundation, and a stone of stumbling,—the “head of the corner,” and a rock of punishment,—for the edification of some, and for the ruin of others;—a Saviour, and a Destroyer. Thus did Simeon speak of him: “This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.” If the benevolent Redeemer be a destroyer, it is an office forced upon him by the inveteracy of sin: he appears the Dispenser of salvation; and men constitute his very gospel the instrument of their condemnation.

This image denotes whatever is essential in him as a Saviour. What is the character of a rock?—strength, stability, durability. The imagination instantly settles upon it, when the judgment would conceive of firmness. All that God himself produces from nature as the illustration of the security of his people, is conveyed under this image,—“Thy defence shall be the munition of rocks.” Artificial bulwarks, however skilfully formed and combined, yield to these natural fortifications in solidity. The lightning strikes them, and they are shivered; but they continue to lift

their hoary heads, and to bid defiance to the storm. Age after age sees their "thunder-splintered pinnacle" exalted among the clouds, in rude but sublime majesty. Time seems to make fewer impressions upon the rock, than on any other earthly object. It is the last and highest description of mutability which Job gives, when he says, "Surely the *mountain* falling cometh to nought, and the *rock* is removed out of his place." It is the strongest pledge of divine fidelity which the scriptures can gather from nature, when they remind us, in His name, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee." The Alpine elevations, which seem rooted in the centre of the globe on which they stand, may shake as the aspen-leaf to the breezes of the evening, through all their stupendous chain of connection, and from their bases to their summits;—but "the covenant of my peace shall not be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy upon thee." The passing of a few centuries over the face of nature, makes an astonishing alteration in it's appearance. Even the oak acknowledges the influence of time. Kingdoms lose their ancient limits—the city perishes—the river alters it's course; but a chain of rocks frown upon the desolation or culture of the landscape beneath them, with features of un-

altered and savage majesty. As an image, we find in the Saviour's immutability the strength, stability, and durability of the rock combined and exceeded. If these yield more slowly than other things to the influence of years, they submit at last;—one Rock alone remains, unchanged by age, unassailable by the tempest, undestroyed by time,—and “that Rock is, Christ.” The representation of him, not merely as a foundation, but as a *corner-stone*, furnishes another characteristic of the Saviour. Here *union* is combined with strength. The corner-stone is that which connects the parts of the building with each other: and when a temple is reared to the glory of God, does he not cement the “living stones” together? He binds the Jew and the Gentile in the same “spiritual building;”—unites different denominations, as materials of the same value, although apparently incongruous, yet really adapted to this magnificent and eternal structure.

The image supposes *opposition* made to his cause;—and who are chargeable with the offence alleged? Here the context becomes our safest guide: and it is evident that the accusation is against those who stumbled at his *humiliation*. “He came to his own, and his own received him not.”—“He grew up before them as a tender plant, as a root out of a dry ground.”—“He had no form nor comeliness.” When they saw him,

“there was no beauty that they should desire him.”—“He became of no reputation.” There were who could not discern his uncreated glories through a cloud so dense. And are there not those who even yet think religion fit only for the multitude? who hold it in contempt, as a mean system, beneath the attention of a scholar and a gentleman? These Jews were also offended at the *life* of Christ;—its tenour exploded their prejudices. *He* insisted upon the religion of the heart, and laid very little stress upon external observances;—*they* had been accustomed to over-rate ceremonials, and to lose in them the life of godliness. His religion was the religion of benevolence,—he received sinners, and ate with them: these proud religionists were offended, at being compelled to sit down in such company, or to abandon him altogether. They forgot the words of their most illustrious prince,—“The sacrifices of God are a broken heart:”—forgot the declaration of the Deity himself,—“I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” They were scandalized at his *death*; although it was a death which they themselves were *then* plotting, and afterwards procured. And, in truth, it required a strong mind to acknowledge a master who suffered the most ignominious of all punishments,—a death inflicted only upon slaves and criminals. When heathens taunted christians with worshipping

“a crucified God,” they knew how to reconcile this ignominy with his character: they understood wherefore he took upon himself our nature—that “through death he might destroy him that had the power of death,” and secure our immortality: but these Jews, whose prejudices suggested, and whose circumstances seemed to demand, a conquering Messiah, were irreconcilably offended with the meek, the lowly, the suffering Jesus. They were also offended at his *doctrines*: and these remain a “stumbling-stone” to the world still;—“a rock of offence,”—to “the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.” Self-righteousness is the inveterate disease of the human mind, in all ages and nations. Those who are disgusted with the simplicity of christianity, and blend with it their philosophical speculations;—those who deny it’s doctrines, because they cannot reduce the subject of them, as to the mode of it’s subsistence, to the level of their understanding;—those who are offended with the system which humbles the creature in the exact proportion in which it exalts the Creator—are “verily guilty in this thing.”

There are two modes of *falling*. The one is by *ignorance*. “I verily thought,” said St. Paul, when he recapitulated his persecutions of christianity, “I verily thought with myself, that I “ought to do many things contrary to the name

“ of Jesus of Nazareth : ” — and who can doubt his integrity in this assertion ? Something like an apology of this order he makes for the Jews : “ I bear them witness, that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ” We know, therefore, how to pity those who are enemies to Christ through ignorance of his excellencies. We are more disposed to weep over the world, than to censure it. — Yet cannot these be excused. Unbelievers are careless. Is there not a fulness of evidence ? *Our* rejection of Jesus, if we do reject him in effect, although not professedly, is worse than that of the Jews. We stand at a distance which gives us a clearer view of the whole subject ; we are extricated from their national prejudices and personal animosities ; we are cooler in our spirits ; while the evidence which was dealt out to them by degrees, and was not then complete, is afforded us in a perfection which renders our ignorance wilful blindness.

Another mode of falling is, by *malice*. Once they might be scandalized by a scene so novel : now their resistance is obduracy. A Saviour the object of scorn, is not the personage *now* presented to the world ; but an Intercessor and a Sovereign ; one who hath “ ascended up on high, and led his captivity captive ; ” and to whom all power belongs in heaven and on earth. Now it

is not judicial blindness, but determined unbelief. Men are not merely careless unbelievers, but malicious persecutors. Both classes of character are inimical to Jesus; but the last description are the worst, and the most inveterate. Religious mistakes are dangerous; but religious hostility is ruinous. These dash the cup of happiness from the lips of man,—they destroy all his hopes, without affecting to supply their place: and upon such, God will have no mercy, if they die in their rebellion;—the blood of souls is in their skirts, and he will require it at their hands: “He will break them with a rod of iron: he will dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

This image clearly points out the *ruin* of his enemies. Fruitless are all their efforts: they cannot injure him, nor destroy his cause. The injury and loss are all their own. Persecution has happened to the furtherance of the gospel; but has recoiled upon those who employed it. Ignorance, in general, is loss; but here it is a loss incalculable of consolation, hope, peace, every thing estimable. There may be an allusion to the double method of stoning; which was done sometimes by precipitating the criminal upon a rock; and at others, by crushing him under a stone cast upon him;—but it is evident that the image looks forward to future punishment. Now, those who reject Christ sustain injury;—then they

shall meet destruction. By their wilfulness, they pull the stone upon themselves ;—and when it descends, how shall they escape ? “ Whosoever “ shall fall on this stone, shall be broken ; but on “ whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to “ powder.”—“ Kiss,” therefore, “ the Son, lest “ he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when “ his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are “ all they that put their trust in him !”

LECTURE XVIII.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

JOHN XIII. 17.

If ye KNOW these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

THE period is arrived when it is necessary for us to review the labour of the last winter. We are never so deeply impressed with the flight of time, as when we approach the close of any engagement: and when the pursuit is of a moral or religious character, we are more affected by it's conclusion, although we have less to regret upon the retrospect; because we have not to deplore, in that particular instance, time misspent or misapplied. In the anticipation of every design, we see a length of ground stretched before us. We advance step by step, almost unconscious of our progress, until we draw near it's termination; and then we perceive our approximation to the end, with a rapidity which excites our astonishment. It is the same with human life. In it's early stages, the mind amuses itself with a prospect of future existence and occupation, which appears to the

imagination unbounded. Shortly afterwards, immersed in the cares and toils of business, the day is too narrow for action; and the week is gone before half the labours appropriated to it are achieved. The month, the year, steal by, before we are conscious of their departure;—till, as we draw near their consummation, they appear to be accelerated in proportion to the proximity of their conclusion.

The end of religious instruction is moral improvement: “If ye *know* these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them.” So said Jesus when he had enforced the precept of humility by his example; and placed this grace, so difficult to practice, in a point of view, by his own condescension, in which it was impossible not to discern it as a duty. We adopt his language, at the close of this course of Lectures, as an admonition to *you*. Having reached the extent of our plan, it becomes us seriously to examine whether we have individually profited in it’s detail. If we have been only amused, the end has been lost. If we regard the subjects with indifference, we betray an insensibility ominous of our final ruin. If we have taken offence at the severe but correct delineation of human guilt often exhibited in these allegorical representations, as did those to whom they were originally held up, we are adding defiance to injury. In a word, some effect must have been produced;

and it is of importance to decide what is its character. One other subject remains for present examination, and *this* account closes for ever!

It was not without reason, therefore, that our Lord produced the duty of vigilance as the substance of the last of his parables. We should have been almost tempted to have reserved this important point to the close, on account of its effect, if it had not thus presented itself in order. But it is the winding up of his admirable series of parabolic instruction, and his own solemn farewell to his disciples and to the world. He alluded to his own departure in the parable of the Talents, and to the certainty of his return at a remote period. He distinctly stated the duties which devolved upon them, and upon professors of religion in general, during his absence; and the responsibility attached to their privileges. One thing only remained, that, exhibiting under a new image the rewards and punishments of obedience or negligence, he should press upon them the duty of watchfulness, by the certainty of his return, and the uncertainty of its period. This he does in two ways;—the first, by some striking comparisons; the second, by the parable which is principally to occupy your attention on this present occasion, and which concludes the subjects which have been submitted to you in a series of Lectures now terminating.

The great subject on which these closing admo-

nitions turn, is the Day of Judgment : and to this the Saviour passes, by an easy transition, from the calamities which were about to fall upon Jerusalem. With genuine feeling he rises from a day of evil, which, however terrible, was yet temporary and local, to that tremendous hour when the universe shall be assembled ;—and with this sublime climax, his series of incomparable imagery closes. He compares the secrecy with which it shall advance, until it bursts with an explosion as sudden as inconceivable upon mankind, to a robber, stealing with noiseless step upon the silence and darkness of the night, and upon the unsuspecting slumbers of a family :—“ Know this, that if the “ good man of the house had known in what watch “ the thief would come, he would have watched, “ and would not have suffered his house to be broken “ up.” We have here an illustration of the remark, that, in the selection of imagery, the scriptures regard one leading point,—that many things in the figure may be ornamental, and others inapplicable. In one particular only can this comparison relate to the general Judgment, and that is the secrecy with which it approaches. Jesus himself marks this distinctly, when he compares, in the context, the surprise which it will occasion in the world, with the unexpected desolation produced by the deluge in the days of Noah. This allusion is the more impressive, as *they* had received admonitions during the space of one

hundred and twenty years, and either wholly disregarded the warning voice, or imagined that they *might* at any time—perhaps resolved that they *would* at some future time—flee from the impending ruin, and propitiate the incensed Power. The same infatuation yet prevails: and come the day of the Lord when it may, it will open its dreadful stores of vengeance unexpectedly, and take the unthinking world by surprise. While he awakens their attention to the certainty, yet secrecy of his coming, he fixes it upon their duties, and prepares them for their grand and final audit*.

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom
“his lord hath made ruler over his household, to
“give them meat in due season? Blessed is that
“servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall
“find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he
“shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and
“if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord
“delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his
“fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the
“drunken; The lord of that servant shall come
“in a day when he looketh not for him, and in
“an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him
“asunder, and appoint him his portion with the
“hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnash-
“ing of teeth.” The servant here is “ruler over
“the household,”—who had slaves under him, over

* Matt. xxiv. 45—51.

whom he held a delegated authority: while, in return, it appears that his lord had an unlimited power over him, and could inflict whatever punishment he thought proper, for his negligence or insolence. Such was the wretched state of society; and it was the business of our Lord to describe it as he found it. His own gospel, when it prevailed, soon diffused more liberal sentiments, and established the rights of human nature: it took the rod of oppression out of the hands of the petty tyrant; and taught even monarchs, lawful and constituted authorities, that “by Him kings reign, “and princes decree justice,”—that “he that “ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the “fear of the Lord.” This servant had a personal responsibility to his lord; and was accountable, in a degree proportionate to his delegated power, for the conduct of those who were rendered subject to his controul. He was to provide for the family, to regulate it's operations, and prescribe it's duties,—to preserve the property of his master, and distribute his bounty. This trust, well discharged, would conduce to a higher measure of confidence, and place him eventually in a more honourable station. But if, presuming upon the absence of his lord, he neglected his own duty, resigned himself to sensuality, and oppressed those who were placed under his authority, he shall himself feel the weighty indignation of a Superior,

whose justice is equal to his supremacy. Again, in the punishment which he shall suffer, is an allusion to the spirit and practice of arbitrary power; when the master could inflict the most horrible tortures upon the miserable slave, and even put him to the most cruel death. Here it seems to intend a severe scourging, followed by perpetual imprisonment, embittered by repeated torments. Attached to the judgments of God is no injustice; and this circumstance renders his vengeance yet more terrible. For to whatever extremity of pain a man may be reduced, a sense of wrong will inspirit endurance: and even where a consciousness of offence exists, that impulse of injury will be felt where the punishment is carried beyond just limits. But against the righteous indignation of God no charge can be alleged; and no proud feeling of self-respect remains to support the spirit, under the terrible penalties which it has incurred, and must endure, in the future and eternal world. These images lived long in the remembrance of the apostles. St. Peter retains and employs the *former* of them, in his Second Epistle, when he writes—"The day
" of the Lord will come as a *thief* in the night;
" in the which the heavens shall pass away with a
" great noise, and the elements shall melt with
" fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that
" are therein, shall be burnt up." And he applies

it, when he adds, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?"—These closing expressions well accord with the imagery of the principal parable yet to be considered. St. Paul seems to allude to the *latter*, when he requires masters to regulate their treatment of their inferiors by the consciousness of their own responsibility; at the same time that he admonishes servants in their duties, and guards them against sloth and waste. "Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men: Knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal: Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."—In *both*, our Lord produces the uncertainty of the time of his coming as a motive for vigilance; which is farther enforced in the parable of

THE TEN VIRGINS*.

* Matt. xxv. 1—13.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened
“unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went
“forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them
“were wise, and five were foolish. They that
“were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil
“with them : But the wise took oil in their vessels
“with their lamps. While the bridegroom
“tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at
“midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the
“bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him.
“Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their
“lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise,
“Give us of your oil ; for our lamps are gone out.
“But the wise answered, saying, Not so ; lest
“there be not enough for us and you : but go ye
“rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.
“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom
“came ; and they that were ready went in with
“him to the marriage : and the door was shut.
“Afterward came also the other virgins, saying,
“Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered
“and said, Verily I say unto you, I know
“you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not
“the day nor the hour when the Son
“of Man cometh.”

The sentiment of this parable is, *The necessity and duty of christian watchfulness*—inculcated by an affecting picture of the disappointment of those careless professors, whose character is drawn by

so masterly a hand. This principle is established beyond doubt by the concluding admonition: and whatever of difficulty may appear in the imagery, arises out of those singularities of custom which will be easily removed by a reference to Eastern manners, and their peculiar ceremonies on marriage occasions. In this, as in other parables, some things are admitted, to preserve the image, which must not be too closely interpreted: and if this be conceded, the difficulties which some commentators have felt will be avoided. They have been puzzled to determine how they were to “buy for themselves” a supply of divine grace,—or how they could procure it at all, at the time of their master’s appearance; without considering that these representations were necessary and natural in the image adopted, while one leading principle alone was inculcated, which was most powerfully enforced by all the circumstances supposed.

The prominent feature in this parable is a *marriage-procession*,—to which all the other parts of the description are only circumstances. The bride was brought home to the house of the bridegroom, after the nuptial ceremony, with great pomp; and the splendour of the procession, and of the entertainments on those joyous occasions, corresponded with the wealth and rank of the parties. We have accounts of more than twenty thousand garments being distributed at the

wedding of some persons of superior rank; and the corresponding presents were incalculable. It is the highest insult that can be offered to a bridegroom, especially of lofty station, to refuse his presents at such a moment. This circumstance has been already noticed in the parable of the Marriage-feast, relative to the wedding-garment. These processions are sometimes performed on foot: at others, the parties are seated respectively on a mule, with a canopy carried over them by attendants; to which a transparent drapery is attached, covering the animal and the rider,—veiling, but not wholly concealing, the person. More commonly, in the East, the bride and bridegroom are in a palanquin; a covered carriage, to which poles are attached, and borne on the shoulders of slaves—the carriage being in the centre of the procession. In all cases, music and shoutings accompany them. To this, I imagine, John the Baptist alludes, when he says, “He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom: but “the friend of the bridegroom which standeth by “and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of “the bridegroom’s voice: this *my* joy, therefore, “is fulfilled.” I cannot suppose that he places himself in the situation of a friend standing by to witness the pleasure which the bridegroom takes in the conversation of his wife, and their interchange of endearment; for it is the esta-

blished habit of that country, that a considerable degree of reserve is kept up on those occasions: nor do I conceive that it is the bridegroom's "voice" in which he "rejoices;" for that silence which is peculiar to their habits, is observed with greater strictness on such solemnities. The term "voice" doubtless applies to the music and songs accompanying the procession; and is peculiarly suited to John, who *preceded* the Messiah. He represents himself as one who ran before, to apprise the household of the approach of their Lord, and who stands waiting until his arrival. He hears the sound of the music announcing his approach, and feels the exultation of friendship in his happiness. "This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled." 'I have thus proclaimed his advent; and now receiving your report of his works, and their effects, I hear the signals of his progress, and rejoice in his success.'

This procession did not take place until the evening,—sometimes not until late at night: and this custom was not confined to the East; it was common to antiquity, and observed by the Romans. It was therefore necessary that torches, or lamps, should be employed—the probable reason for the reservation of the procession until a late hour, to give effect by the brilliancy of the scene. The splendour of a procession so illuminated would correspond with the numbers

who composed it: and while the appointed train of a sovereign, or a man of rank, would of itself be prodigious—when it is remembered that the neighbours who were not expressly invited, if they felt disposed to join the procession according to it's established rites, were permitted to share the bridal festivities—on the marriage of affluent and distinguished characters, the concourse must have been immense. The rejoicings usually lasted seven days; and the profusion displayed, during this period of it's celebration, is inconceivable by persons conversant only with European habits. The Song of Solomon, in whatever point of view it may be otherwise regarded, is evidently founded on the ceremonies of an Eastern marriage; and has been, by the labours of learned and ingenious men, fairly divided into seven days: while very probable arrangements have been made to distinguish the different speakers, in a piece manifestly dramatic. If it be translated with care, and in reference to the various parts of the dress of the individuals, their circumstances, and the surrounding scenery, there will not be found any of those indelicate allusions, which have partly arisen from a translation not sufficiently accurate, and partly from ignorance of the customs and scenery to which it alludes. The term “He is the chief among ten thousand,” seems rather to mean “lustrous among ten thousand lights;”

perhaps, in allusion to the splendour of such a royal procession as would attend the nuptials of Solomon, it might be paraphrased, if not literally rendered, 'The chief, or prince, for whom ten thousand lamps are kindled.'

It is now evident to what the principal parts of the parable allude. A marriage procession is supposed;—it is delayed until midnight. Ten virgins wait to fall in with it, as it approaches the house, prepared with lamps which must be borne by the attendants on such solemnities. A part of them had made an inadequate provision;—they had oil in their lamps, had the procession arrived early; but none to replenish them, should it be unusually delayed. It was so long deferred, that they were overcome with weariness; and when the noise of the approaching train awakened them, those who had only a temporary supply of oil found their lamps extinguished. They could not mingle with the attendants without light: and while they hastened to procure assistance, the procession closed—the company entered the house—the festivities commenced—the doors were shut; and when at length these negligent virgins arrived, they were considered as not of the party, and denied admittance. The general import of this figurative description is obvious. The return of Jesus will be an event as joyful as it will be awful. The splendour of a procession marks it's

grandeur—the hour of midnight, it's solemnities—the festivities, that bliss prepared for his friends—the virgins, those who profess to be looking for him :—of those, some are prepared to meet him ;—others, who are making no provision, while the means of religious improvement are afforded, shall awake at last to disappointment and exclusion.

Such being the general import of the parable, it is now necessary to examine it more distinctly ; and seriously to lay it to heart, by applying it to our own character and conduct.

Professors of religion, in general, are intended : for the principal persons named are alike called "*Virgins*;" although five were wise, and five foolish ;—some sincere and prepared—others false and negligent. Externally, they resembled each other : and the term implies decency and propriety of conduct—a fair character—a sound creed—a form of godliness. It was such a regulated profession, that it was not distinguishable, to a mortal eye, from true religion, until the test of death and judgment was applied to it. How far may men advance in deceiving themselves and others ! They had "*lamps*,"—an ostensible profession,—and that not without light. They were not destitute of oil for the present ; but they had no provision for the future. They approached the sanctuary in company with christians, and

united in it's external observances as did others. The illumination of ordinances shone around them; and both in knowledge, and in conforming to the regulations of christianity, no difference could be discerned between them. An extensive acquaintance with religion systematically may be obtained, without an experience of it's power. A superior understanding, cultivated by education and ordinances, may constitute a man "a guide to the blind, a light to them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes,"—a brilliant professor, and often even an useful and acceptable minister;—and yet it is only a present flame; there is no reservoir of oil to supply the lamp; it is consuming while it shines,—it shall go out in the blackness of darkness for ever. They were *waiting* for the bridegroom. They believed his promise, that he would come. They not merely expected him; but, in a measure, prepared to meet him: they went forth, in the use of ordinances, to listen for his approach. They evidently hoped for acceptance at his appearance. They deceived themselves, while they imposed upon others.—Who can doubt that this subject applies to professors?—And what are you doing here this evening? By your appearance in the sanctuary—by your taking the word of God upon your lips—by your engagement in the services of religion—you are professing the same attachments, and entertaining the same

hopes : but wherein have you exceeded these unwise virgins ?

The *alarm* is death and judgment. *Death*, because then the individual is cited before his Lord :—*judgment*, because that is the day when Jesus shall re-appear in all his glory ; when all must “ go forth to meet him ;” and when many shall be glorified with him. What impressive circumstances are detailed ! It is a *sudden* alarm : “ They all slumbered and slept.”

Who is so watchful, as not to be taken at last unawares ? That death should surprise those who are casting off the thoughts of dying, and repelling reflection whenever conscience obtrudes it, is not astonishing : but we venture to say of the man who is living in a state of habitual preparation, that when the messenger enters, and says, “ The Master is come, and calleth for thee,” while faith will spread the ready wing, the emotions of nature will be felt, and the tidings will chill the heart. He who is waiting the flight of time, will startle to hear it strike the last hour. He who is dwelling on the brink of Jordan, will turn pale when the signal is given him to cross the river ; and shudder as he dips his foot in the dark, cold, troubled wave of mortality. “ But they *all* slumbered and slept :”—they died before they met their Lord. The wise, as well as the foolish, went down into the grave. Those who were the most wakeful

expectants of the morning star, yielded to the sleep of death before he arose. "Our fathers, "where are they? and the prophets, do they live "for ever?" We who are now waiting for the same blessed hope, shall in like manner fall asleep: but, "at midnight a cry shall be made, Behold, "the bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet "him."

It is, then, an *awful* signal:—the bridegroom seems to have delayed beyond the usual and expected hour: those, therefore, who were waiting, grew weary and slumbered—and the sudden alarm, at such an hour, and in such circumstances, threw them all into confusion. Does not the parable imply, that death and judgment, however safe to some, are always attended with fearful circumstances? It was at midnight that the first-born of Egypt died—at midnight that the angel smote the Assyrians;—and how much were those calamities increased by the hour, and circumstances of the infliction! The Fathers have concluded that Jesus will command the trumpet of judgment to be blown really at midnight: and this is an idea which we early associate with the other terrors of that dreadful day, probably from this very passage. It is, however, in reference both to death and judgment, an irresistible mandate.

No force can then resist, no flight can save:

All yield alike, the fearful and the brave.

But oh ! what shall then be the horrors of an *unprepared* state !—and such a condition is supposed on the part of the foolish virgins. There is a wide distinction between profession and preparation. They had lamps—but not oil. We have already seen what they possessed—a decent character—religious means—a serious deportment—a sound creed. It is now necessary to glance at their deficiency. They had not a vital principle of religion—a spiritual life, imparted by the Holy Spirit—a germ of grace, budding into fruitfulness, and ripening into glory. Their knowledge was superficial, not experimental. Their resolutions were feeble, not being rooted and grounded in Christ. Their dispositions were light, not being under the influence of the gospel. Their very preparation was ostentation ; designed to meet the eye of men, rather than directed towards the proposed object of appearing before God. They were careful only for the present, when they seemed most earnest to secure the future. They were anxious to have a name to live while they were dead. How seldom is this point determined until that day ! The church cannot determine for them, and they will not determine for themselves. How far men may advance, and yet be lost at last ! “ They rose and trimmed their lamps,”—all unconscious, as it should seem, until then, of their deficiency and negligence. Care-

lessness and presumption ruin the soul. But *then* it must be discovered;—then, their own eyes shall be opened to their character;—then they shall be seen by others as they really are;—then God, to whom they were known, shall expose and sentence them.

And what a fearful *exclusion* is implied by a simple image—"The door was shut!" The door of *hope*—self-delusion, is no more. The vain and groundless expectations which they had formed are cut off for ever:—as a man who dreams of some pleasure dearest to his heart, is suddenly roused by shrieks of horror, and awakes to find his habitation on fire, and himself encompassed by flames from which there is no escape. The door of *ordinances* is shut. Once they might have "bought for themselves:"—salvation was freely offered—was tendered "without money and without price." They listened, and approved: they purposed, and trifled. The time is gone by. No more sermons tell the same interesting, but disregarded tale: no sabbaths return. The door of *mercy* is shut. Jesus no longer stands and knocks at the human heart, soliciting admittance, and pleading his promises. Nay, he is no longer ready and willing to receive them. He has descended from the throne of grace, and ascended the tribunal of judgment. The door of *heaven* is shut. To secure the righteous against all intrusion and

molestation—it is shut, against sin, and sorrow, and death;—and to exclude these careless professors from all share, but not from all sight of that bliss. They shall behold, and wonder, and perish. The *prison door* is shut also: for the parable supposes not merely exclusion, but punishment. This had been awfully enforced in the representation of the torments inflicted upon the “evil servant.” And from this prison of darkness, horror, and despair, which excludes all that is desirable, and shuts in with the captive all that is fearful—there can be no redemption.

But “blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb!” St. John was commanded to “WRITE” this interesting truth—for various reasons: It was *hard to be understood*, because it related to the future; and still more difficult to be received, because of the fascinations of the present;—that it might be correctly stated, and frequently pondered;—that it might also stand a witness against the folly and wilfulness of those who despise or neglect it. As a *perpetual* truth, it ought to have a permanent form; that it might bear alike upon all ages. As it was, an *important* truth, it required to be always before the eyes of mankind. As it was a *positive law*, it was necessary to reduce it to writing, for the guidance of those whom it was intended to govern. And as it is a *consoling* truth, it is kindly and wisely

transmitted through all generations; that in all circumstances, christians may take the comfort and triumph over their calamities. It is true, it is also intended for repeated *admonition*;—for who does not seek rest here? and murmur when he is disappointed? although it would be destructive to his hopes, injurious to his interests, ruinous to his character, dangerous to his peace, and strike heaven itself into hazard as his home, if he were indulged. Repelled by affliction, he still turns to the world; until repeated disappointments at length make him hear the voice which says, “This is not your rest.” Then he seeks it beyond the grave, and finds it in the society and felicity of heaven.

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them!” Most happy will it be for us, if we have gathered from this series of our Lord’s parabolic instructions what they were intended to teach us;—if we have learned from these parables, to receive the word of life into our hearts—to cultivate a spirit of christian forgiveness—to exercise the principles of active benevolence—to guard against the love of money—to avail ourselves of the Divine forbearance, for the improvement of our character—to receive with cordiality the free and full salvation provided in the gospel—to arise and go to our heavenly Father in a spirit of contrition and love—to renounce a slothful and luxurious

life—to cast away our self-righteousness—to appreciate the character of the Shepherd of Israel—to do the work of Him who has called us, while it is day—to improve our talents—to take warning by those who, rejecting Christ, “miserably perished,”—and to look, in the exercise of prayer and vigilance, for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour.

But we hasten to improve the parable, and the course of Lectures, in our Lord’s own impressive and figurative words:—“Not every one that
“saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the
“kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will
“of my Father which is in heaven. Many will
“say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we
“not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name
“have cast out devils ? and in thy name done
“many wonderful works ? And then will I profess
“unto them, I never knew you : depart from me,
“ye that work iniquity. Therefore, whosoever
“heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them,
“I will liken him unto a wise man, which built
“his house upon a rock : And the rain descended,
“and the floods came, and the winds blew, and
“beat upon that house ; and it fell not : for it
“was founded upon a rock. And every one that
“heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them
“not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which
“built his house upon the sand : And the rain

“descended, and the floods came, and the winds
“blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and
“great was the fall of it.”—This image, so full of
beauty and grandeur, requires no exposition,
because of its simplicity. The *sentiment* is of
awful import. Those who infer their safety from
the attention with which they listen to the word
of life, and approve its system, while their cha-
racter and conduct are uninfluenced by its spirit,
will perish under its penalties. With their pro-
fessions and expectations, they resemble those who,
after a long voyage, discern the white cliffs of their
native country, and are wrecked upon its very
shores, with all the images of domestic felicity in
their imagination, and all the feelings of home
warm at their hearts:—so these sink within sight
of the harbour! But those who have cordially
received the word of the Saviour into their heart,
and upon whose lives it has the ascendancy of the
ruling principle, shall stand every shock of na-
ture, and survive the dissolution of the material
universe.

In the mean while, by all these images, our
attention is invariably directed to the approxima-
tion of the last great day. The bridal procession,
and the storms of rain, wind, and flood, all relate
to the same grand event, and to the opposite and
eternal results of its severe, but just, scrutiny.
Time is swiftly advancing to the consummation

of all things. The tide of years seems to quicken it's current as it approaches the abyss of eternity in which it shall be absorbed. Every revolution of the heavenly bodies strikes a new hour in the course of time itself. The stupendous events of providence, which crowd so many and such important incidents into so small a space, seem to hasten the crisis, and to give warning that the last hour is about to be struck, and that all is nearly finished. At all events, with us, as individuals, these things are rapidly drawing to a close:—"Watch, therefore, for ye know neither
"the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man
"cometh!"

NOTES.

IN addition to what was said on the parable of the *Prodigal Son*, relative to the "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance;" although I feel myself satisfied that the true interpretation of the passage has been given in the Lecture, in translating δικαίους (or "just persons") *established saints*, and μετάνοια (rendered in our translation "repentance") *conversion*; yet, should any doubt remain as to the propriety of this criticism, a distinguished Clergyman in the North, has suggested to me the possibility that δικαίους may refer to "the spirits of just men made perfect," as best comporting with the image of sheep already gathered into the fold; and whose security forms, therefore, the stronger contrast with the danger and misery of the poor wanderer. Nor will the expression, that he "left the ninety and nine in the wilderness," make against this ingenious interpretation; the wilderness being the common pasturage of the flock: witness the taunt of David's elder brother, when the young shepherd, commissioned by his father to inquire after the health of his brother, entered the camp—"With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?" There the Arabs fold their flocks to this hour.

IN respect to the parable of the *Good Shepherd*, an ingenious Friend has intimated,—“A reflection on the pastoral character of Christ, “as so beautifully exhibited in the 10th chapter of St. John’s Gospel, “in accordance with Psalm xxiii. Isaiah, Revelation, and other parts “of the Scriptures, induces me to remark, that our Lord *typically* “appears at the well of Samaria (John iv.) as the GOOD SHEPHERD; “spiritually and graciously dispensing the *waters of life* to the poor “flock of Shechem, at the very well where the Patriarchs had watered “their thirsty flocks; even at the very hour of watering, the *sixth* “hour. (‘It is yet *high* day . . . water ye the sheep.’ Gen. xxix. 7.) “According to Dr. Lightfoot, the person of Rachel is made to “represent the *Jewish Church*, &c. &c.; and perhaps the woman of “Samaria, with her five husbands, might be ingeniously compared

“to the ‘adulterous,’ or degraded forms of worship of the ten tribes,” (mingled with the heathens, after the captivity, and indeed seduced from the worship of the true God) “from the time of Jeroboam to “the period of our Lord’s incarnation—‘Ye worship ye know not “what.’

“Matthew Henry observes, ‘Shechem yielded the first proselytes “that ever came into the Church of Israel (Gen. xxxiv.); and now it is “the first place where the gospel is preached out of the common- “wealth of Israel,’ &c. &c. Henry on *John* iv.

“What an amazing connection and harmony! not only the Law “and the Prophets, but the Mosaic history itself being full of “Christ!”

I cannot withhold the following beautiful extracts from *Dr. Clarke’s 2d volume of Travels*. “The history of Sichem, referring to events “long prior to the Christian dispensation, directs us to antiquities “which owe nothing of their celebrity to any traditionary aid. The “traveller, directing his footsteps towards it’s ancient sepulchres, as “everlasting as the rocks wherein they are hewn, is permitted, upon “the authority of sacred and indelible record, to contemplate the “spot where the remains of Joseph, of Eleazar, and of Joshua, were “severally deposited*. If any thing connected with the memory of “past ages, be calculated to awaken local enthusiasm, the land “around this city is pre-eminently entitled to that distinction. The “sacred story of events transacted in the fields of Sichem, is, from “our earliest years, remembered with delight; but having the ter- “ritory actually before our eyes, where those events took place, and “beholding objects as they were described above 3000 years ago, “the grateful impression kindles into ecstasy. Along the valley we “beheld ‘a company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead,’ as in the “days of Reuben and Judah, ‘with their camels bearing spicery, and “balm, and myrrh,’ who would gladly have purchased another “Joseph of his brethren, and conveyed him, as a slave, to some “Potiphar in Egypt. Upon the hills around, flocks and herds were “feeding, as of old; nor in the simple garb of the shepherds of Sa- “maria was there any thing contrary to the notions we may

* Joshua xxiv. 29, 30, 32, 33.

"entertain of the appearance presented by the sons of Jacob. It was
 "indeed a sight to abstract and to elevate the mind; and during
 "feelings thus awakened by every circumstance of powerful coinci-
 "dence, a single moment seemed to concentrate whole ages of exis-
 "tence."—p. 512, 513. Again he remarks, "Perhaps no christian
 "scholar ever attentively read the 4th chapter of St. John, without
 "being struck with the numerous internal evidences of truth which
 "crowd upon the mind in it's perusal. Within so small a compass,
 "it is impossible to find, in other writings, so many sources of reflec-
 "tion and interest. Independently of it's importance as a theological
 "document, it concentrates so much information, that a volume might
 "be filled with it's singular illustration of the history of the Jews,
 "and the geography of their country. All that can be collected
 "upon these subjects by Josephus, seems but as a comment to this
 "chapter. The journey of our Lord from Judæa into Galilee; the
 "cause of it; his passage through the territory of Samaria; his
 "approach to the metropolis of that country; it's name; his arrival
 "at the Amorite field, which terminates the narrow valley of Sichem;
 "the ancient custom of halting at a well; the female employment
 "of drawing water; the Disciples sent into the city for food, by which
 "it's situation out of the town is so obviously implied; the question
 "of the woman referring to existing prejudices, which separated the
 "Jews from the Samaritans; the depth of the well; the oriental
 "allusion contained in the expression, '*living water*;' the history of
 "the well, and the customs thereby illustrated; the worship upon
 "Mount Gerizim; all these occur within the space of twenty verses!"
 —p. 519, 520. This excellent writer took his Bible as his map over
 all Palestine: so faithfully and so accurately are it's features de-
 lined; and so much has time been commanded to spare, in order
 to present an everlasting testimony of the truth of the Scriptures,
 that reflections, such as these which I have now submitted, occur
 constantly in his most interesting work, excited by the perfect
 agreement which he found between the descriptions of the Sacred
 Writings, and the actual and existing features of the country.

THE END.

By the same Author,

LECTURES on SCRIPTURE FACTS. 1 vol. 8vo.
14s. Second Edition.

SCRIPTURE PROPHECY. 1 vol.
8vo. 14s.

SCRIPTURE MIRACLES. 1 vol.
8vo. 14s.

The NATURE and PERPETUITY of the INFLUENCES of the HOLY SPIRIT. A Sermon delivered at a Monthly Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches. 8vo. 2s.

Also published by BLACK & Co.

1. BURDER'S VILLAGE SERMONS;—or, Short and Plain Discourses, for the Use of Families, Schools, and Religious Societies. By the Rev. GEORGE BURDER. Vol. I. to VI. 12mo. 2s. each. Ditto in 8vo. at 3s. each.

2. LECTURES ON THE PASTORAL CHARACTER. By the late GEORGE CAMPBELL, D.D. F.R.S. Edinburgh, Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen. Edited by James Fraser, D.D. Minister of Drumoak, Aberdeenshire. 8vo. 7s.

3. RURAL DISCOURSES. By WM. CLAYTON, of Saffron Walden. 2 vols. 12mo. 4s. sewed.

The Rural Discourses are printed in Sections, and may be distributed as Twenty-four separate Tracts, at the pleasure of the Purchaser.

4. MESSIAH'S ADVENT; or, Remarks on the MORAL TENDENCY of the Doctrine of CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION in the FLESH. By SAMUEL CHASE, M.A. 10s. 6d. boards.

5. TRAVELS in SOUTH AFRICA, undertaken at the Request of the Missionary Society, by JOHN CAMPBELL, Minister of Kingsland Chapel. Third Edition, corrected. 8vo. 10s. 6d. boards.
A few Copies on Royal Paper, Proof Plates. 18s. boards.

6. ACCOUNT of the ABOLITION of FEMALE INFANTICIDE in GUZERAT; with Considerations on the Question of Promoting the Gospel in India. By the Rev. JOHN CORMACK, M.A. Minister of Stow. 1 vol. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

7. The FAMILY EXPOSITOR; or, a Paraphrase and Version of the NEW TESTAMENT, with Critical Notes, and a Practical Improvement of each Section. By PHILIP DONDERIDGE, D.D. Tenth Edition, carefully corrected. With a Life of the Author, by ANDREW KIRKES, D.D. F.R.S. and S.A. 6 vols. 8vo. 3l. 3s.

8. AN ESSAY on IMMORTALITY. By the Author of a Review of First Principles of Bishop Berkeley, Dr. Reid, and Professor Stewart. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

9. The BOOK of JOB, literally translated from the Original Hebrew, and restored to its natural Arrangement; with Notes Critical and Illustrative; and an Introductory Dissertation on its Scene, Scope, Language, Author, and Object, by JOHN MASON GOON, F.R.S. Mem. Am. Phil. Soc. and F. L. S. of Philadelphia. 8vo. 6s.

BS
680
P2C7

63192

Collyer
Lectures on Scrip-
ture parables.

NOV 16 '38

FEB 9 '40

Gung
D. W. B. 1452940
Shigen 1459746

2-29549

63192

